



The Guardian Weekly

Vol 153, No 4
Week ending July 23, 1995

The Washington Post Le Monde

Ghosts of war flee fall of Srebrenica

EYEWITNESS
Julian Borger in Medjedja, on the Bosnian front line

LIKE an army of ghosts, a column of 5,000 Bosnian soldiers and civilians, missing since the fall of the Srebrenica enclave last week, staggered out of the wooded hills of northern Bosnia on Monday, exhausted and frail from a desperate five-day march to safety across Serb-held territory.

According to survivors, hundreds died in the escape attempt from Srebrenica when they were cut down by Serb ambushes or by starvation. Others, tormented by hallucinations brought on by fear and hunger, wandered off into the bush and vanished.

The ordeal pushed some beyond the borders of sanity. One man killed himself with a hand grenade on the march, a survivor recalled: "He was yelling he wanted to go home, and pulled the pin, killing the people standing around him."

At a clinic treating the ragged arrivals in Medjedja village, Akira Hukic, a nurse, said: "No one has passed this spot without asking for tranquillisers . . . Some are completely *terrified*. I had one man pointing a pistol to his head saying he refused to surrender — to me! They say there are others in the woods who can't believe they're safe. 'They're too scared to come down."

Bosnian army troops mounted an offensive at the weekend to force an opening in the Serb lines near Medjedja, through which the column of survivors could reach safety. But as many as 3,000 may still be trapped behind enemy lines, having been separated from the main column during an ambush. They were believed to be waiting on Monday for their chance to break across the front.

The survivors have brought with them their wounded, and a profound bitterness towards the rest of the world for allowing a United Nations-designated "safe area" to fall into the hands of the Bosnian Serb rebels, who had already shown themselves capable of large-scale atrocities.

"No one will ever know what it was like," one soldier murmured. "It is the world which has done this, and Mr [Yasushi] Akashi," he said, spitting out the name of the UN's representative in the region.

On a bench near the Medjedja clinic, two pairs of brothers — Omer and Ramo *Ibrahimovic*, and Avdo and Alija Softic — sipped beer and stared at the hills from where they had come. Their eyes gazed *out from skulls stripped of flesh by* lack of food and sleep.

Ramo, at 27 the youngest, his shoulders narrow as a coat-hanger, *was the first to speak. "We slept dur*ing the day, usually just an hour at a time," he said. "We ate leaves with salt on them, unripe apples with sugar. I saw *people die of starvation."*

Omer recalled how Ramo began sleepwalking and hallucinating: "He was walking like a robot, whispering, *'I want to go home', over and* over again. And I said: 'There is no home; there is no Srebrenica'."

When their column marched out *of the enclave on Wednesday* last week, it was 10,000-strong. It was made up mainly of soldiers who were ordered to escape by Bosnian army commanders in the hope that they could join up with government forces around Tuzla.

From Srebrenica, *they trekked* for 50 miles to the north-west mostly single-file, across two mountain ranges, fording two rivers. *Along the way, some women and* children joined them in the hope of protection from the Bosnian Serbs. Some of the soldiers carried *toddlers, while 12-year-old boys* marched beside them.

"We could hear the Serbs in the night. They were shouting at us *through megaphones to give our*selves up," said Avdo Softic, aged 33. Surrender was out of the question, after a soldier said he had survived *a massacre of 70* Muslim prisoners near the Serb-held area of Konjevic Polje.

Scouts helped the retreating column avoid rebel Serb patrols and mines. "They would come back and tell us which path to walk on," Ramo said. But they twice walked into Serb ambushes.

Omer Ibrahimovic, aged 43, said: "They allowed us to walk along the *bottom of a valley and then opened* fire on us from both sides. I don't know how many people were killed. It broke the column in two."

The ambush took place on Wednesday evening last week close to the Serb-held village of Kravica, near Konjevic Polje. The second *was west of Zvornik, on the Serbian* border.

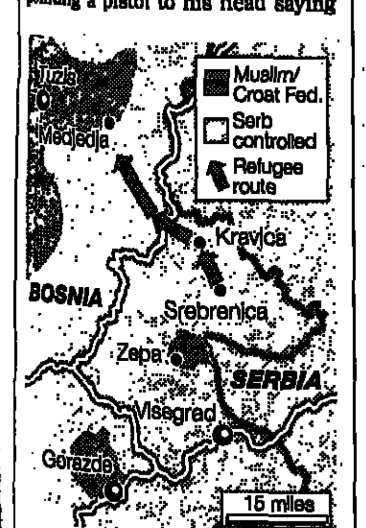
According to Serb sources, clashes with the retreating column *forced rebel commanders to with*draw forces besieging Zepa, to protect Zvornik. They claimed that after the second clash, the rebel leader*ship decided to allow the retreating* column to cross their lines so the rebels could break Zepa's resistance.

Up to 5,000 people were cut off from the Bosnian army column by the first attack at Kravica. Their fate is still unknown.

A Bosnian army officer said the 3,000 soldiers believed to be waiting behind Serb lines had to break through soon. "They have no more reserves of energy. If the Chetniks [Serbs] attack them as they try to cross, our soldiers will hit them all along the front."

By Sunday night, the survivors were giving up hope of survival when they stumbled across a Bosnian army patrol behind enemy lines. "I recognised them from their worry-beads, pinned to their jackets. I knew they were ours," said Alija Softic. "It was a fantastic moment, like being reborn."

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Left divided, page 8
Comment, page 12
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Tearful reunion . . . A Srebrenica Muslim finds his family in Tuzla after a six-day separation PHOTOGRAPH: MICHEL EULER

Bosnians take heart from fighters' resistance

Martin Woollacott in Sarajevo

THE Bosnian Serbs have again humiliated the United Nations by threatening to fire on virtually defenceless Ukrainian troops in the Zepa enclave in the event of Nato air action, spokesmen here said on Monday. They accused the Serbs of ignoring the rules of warfare and of possibly committing war crimes.

President Alija Izetbegovic has agreed to negotiate with the Serbs over evacuating civilians from Zepa, tacitly accepting its fall following Srebrenica's capture last week. "The president said he'd like us to mediate with the Bosnian Serbs to see what might be the terms and conditions for the civilian population to be moved out of Zepa to prevent further suffering," said UN spokesman Lieutenant-Colonel Gary Coward in Sarajevo.

Sarajevo is taking grim satisfaction from the contrast it sees between the surrender of UN forces in Srebrenica and Zepa and the tough resistance offered by its own soldiers.

"Heroic defence of Zepa" read the banner headline in the newspaper Oslobodjenje, with the story of its 150 defenders holding out against much larger forces. The article ended with the suggestion that when the formal fight was over, the men would retreat into the north of the enclave, where they would fight on from caves.

However, no one here doubts Zepa will fall, and there is little hope of substantial help for Gorazde. But the Bosnian government believes Gorazde, garrisoned with as many as 4,000 soldiers, would be a very tough nut for the Serb forces to crack.

Tories back away from privacy law

Andrew Culf and Rebecca Smithers

THE British government has retreated from introducing a privacy law and new criminal offences to curb intrusive behaviour by newspapers.

But Virginia Bottomley, the National Heritage Secretary, urged the press to set up a compensation fund for victims of intrusion and said self-regulation would have to be toughened to prevent abuses of privacy.

The heavily watered-down white paper, two years in gestation, was greeted by jeers and heckling from backbench Conservative MPs on Monday, including scathing criticism from Sir Edward Heath, the former prime minister.

Chris Smith, shadow heritage secretary, who claimed the package had received virtually no support in the House, expressed severe disappointment that bugging and intrusions into private property had not been outlawed.

The white paper was welcomed by Lord Wakeham, chairman of the *Press Complaints Commission*, widely credited as the architect of the watchdog's restored reputation.

He was pleased the Government *had "recognised the great advances* we have made in the last six months in making the PCC tougher and more independent."

Mrs Bottomley's proposal of a telephone hotline, linking Lord Wakeham and editors, is designed to enable him to warn them when he *fears the code is about to be* breached. But Sir Edward Heath said he could not agree that the proposals would be effective and he castigated the British press, which he said ranked among the worst in the world in terms of its responsibility.

Austria	AS30	Malta	45c
Belgium	BF75	Netherlands	G 4.40
Denmark	DK16	Norway	NK 16
Finland	FM 9.50	Portugal	E300
France	FF 13	Spain	P 275
Germany	DM 3.60	Sweden	SK 17
Greece	DR 400	Switzerland	SF 3.30
Italy	L 3,000	Thailand	60 Baht

Who needs nuclear arms in the post-cold war era?

AS AN Englishman living in a lovely part of Australia, I wish to add my voice to the growing protest against the imminent resumption of nuclear testing by the French in the Pacific. Were I still living and working in England I would feel the same.

From 1948-73 I was a pilot in the Royal Air Force, and in the course of my duties was required to train to deliver nuclear weapons as part of the UK nuclear deterrent force. I was, and still am, in complete agreement with the philosophy of the nuclear deterrent, believing that it maintained peace during the dangerous cold war period.

With the collapse of the Soviet empire and the start of genuine discussion between East and West, I, like millions of others, heaved a huge sigh of relief and gave thanks that a nuclear war between East and West was no longer a threat.

In spite of the disappointments at the way rabid nationalism has led to the settling of old scores in supposedly civilised parts of Europe, and the horrors still going on in central Africa and other parts of the world, I can see no need for any country to hold on to its nuclear deterrent force at the level at which it was in the cold war period, let alone to test new weapons of mass destruction.

Who are they deterring? And to say that once we have got these tests out of the way, we will be happy to abide by the arms limitation treaty due to be signed at some future date is pure hypocrisy. All the nuclear powers have more than enough weapons to inflict catastrophic damage on whoever they have in mind, let alone the world in general, as things stand. There should be a genuine desire to get rid of all the weapons that are no longer necessary, not to test new ones so the old ones can be bargained away.

As usual, Greenpeace, along with other groups and great numbers of ordinary people who care for the future of the environment, are at the forefront of the protest. But where is any protest from the British government? If there has been any, it has not reached the papers here. Maybe they remember using Christmas Island and Woomera for the tests of the UK bomb in the 1950s, but at least there was the need for a credible deterrent then. Where is that need now?

Tim Mills,
Lismore, NSW, Australia

DAVID LOS'S defence of the Chirac (or is it the military?) decision to resume nuclear testing at Mururoa is contemptible (July 9). Equally contemptible is his vision of New Zealand as a white supremacist coloniser ready to run for the cover of any nuclear skirt in the neighbourhood should our country be threatened.

The Chirac attitude is that France has the right to test in its own territory and that, in any case, testing is safe. If these attitudes are correct, testing should be conducted in France. Imagine the outrage in Europe. Testing is unsafe anywhere and no one on earth should tolerate it any more.

The people of the Pacific, including New Caledonia and Tahiti, are telling the Chirac government to stop testing for ever. In essence, peoples of the Pacific are reminding France that it does not own the Pacific, merely a tiny portion of it and then only through colonist activities in the past.

France owns New Caledonia to exploit its resources of nickel and to house a section of the French military. Unlike New Zealand's attitudes to its Maori people, France is not coming to terms with resource ownership by New Caledonia's indigenous people, the Kanaks. When the nickel mountain has gone, so will have France, leaving little wealth for the Kanaks. By comparison, for the enlightenment of David Los, New Zealand is a nation of mixed races, striving in every way to provide for all of its peoples and to right the wrongs of the past through massive monetary payouts and the return of lands to rightful Maori ownership. That is the honest practice of a country working to expunge the dark deeds of early colonists.

Los's concluding assertion that David Lange generated anti-French hysteria in the eighties as a means of camouflaging New Zealand's economic problems is a flight of fancy typical of the cynically ill-informed. David Lange has not endeared himself to mainstream New Zealand in the long term any more than prime minister Jim Bolger does with his patriarchal arrogance and condescending utterances. What Lange did, none the less, was to demonstrate to the world that New Zealanders are not afraid to stand up for the rights of ordinary people in the face of power brokers who may otherwise have embroiled the world in a nuclear nightmare.

French expatriates and indigenous peoples of French Polynesia must keep telling Chirac he is wrong. There is much more at stake than the sub-structure of Mururoa or the beauty of Pacific island paradises — certainly much more than the smug indifference of a David Los can come to terms with.

Don Mackintosh,
Auckland, New Zealand

Pressure groups have a valid role

IS HUGO YOUNG serious when he describes the decision not to scuttle the Brent Spar under pressure from the Greenpeace campaign as menace to democracy ("Democracy ditched in waves of escapism", July 2)? His argument is that the British government had played its proper role as the broker of the public interest, weighing up the technical issues. The decision in favour of deep water disposal was, therefore, according to Mr Young, a democratic one, and its overturning as a consequence of pressure group activity, an insidious indicator of the power of irresponsible single-issue campaigns.

This is a peculiarly etiolated concept of democracy. The appropriate disposal of oil rigs was certainly not one of the issues on which the last general election was fought. Even if the issue had been mentioned in the Conservative Party manifesto, a deeply unpopular government elected on a minority vote in the first place can hardly justify its subsequent actions as the will of the people. Perhaps the Brent Spar should have been sunk in the Atlantic, or perhaps not. There has certainly been technical debate about what is the most appropriate means of disposing of these rigs. But the government has no credentials as an independent arbiter. For instance, its promotion of road schemes in sites of special scientific interest flies in the face of both scientific advice and public opinion.

There is nothing undemocratic about government being influenced by single-issue campaigns. On the contrary, such campaigns provide the ordinary citizen, who is likely to be alienated from both the major political parties, with his or her only possibility of having a meaningful political voice. It may be a confused and ill-informed voice, at times supporting contradictory policies, but in a real democracy it is sovereign. In some countries this is recognised by the constitution, notably in Switzerland where pressure groups initiate national and local referenda, the results of which are legally binding on the government.

Democracy in Britain is weak, not because pressure groups are too strong, but because there is no institutional framework which can be used to ensure that they are effective, even when they have majority support. At the same time it is an illusion to think that elected politicians can be genuinely representative when real choices at elections are so limited. Does Mr Young think that the only people whose views should count in between those elections are mainstream politicians and journalists?

Tom Smith,
Basle, Switzerland

Half-caste view of India

IT WAS with dismay that I read Elizabeth Young's review of Vikram Chandra's novel, Red Earth And Pouring Rain (July 9).

Ms Young starts with a quote from Kipling saying that one day half-caste Indians will produce a great writer or poet, who will tell "us" (ie, westerners) how they really live and feel. Mr Chandra, she says, although not half-caste but Indian, fulfils Kipling's prediction with his half-caste hero, who is a great writer. In conclusion, she says that Chandra's novel makes it "possible . . . to sense another culture" and to "shed . . . the dead flesh of European objectivism".

Kipling's quote is appropriate, though not in the way Ms Young imagines. Red Earth And Pouring Rain is indeed half-caste literature: it is the work of a writer educated in British-style boarding schools and American universities, and writing for those who want the romance of India rather than the reality.

Ms Young's account of the book emphasises a story-telling white monkey, the splendour of the Raj, three men born of magic sweetmeats, and most of the Indian pantheon. She chooses to gloss over the portion of the novel that is set in the recognisable present and deals in a prosaic way with the tawdry sex-and-drug adventures of an Indian teenager studing in the United States. Perhaps it fails to fit into her conception of what a sense of [Indian] culture should encompass, or comes too close, in its verisimilitude, to the "dead flesh of European objectivism".

If Ms Young wishes to sense Indian culture through writing, Indian magazines and newspapers are widely available to supplement Mr Chandra's imaginations. But she should be warned: most of the people she is likely to meet along the way are mortals, too worried about this existence to concern themselves with the next, and living lives that the Gods, in all their eight-armed artistry, have stained with the tar brush of the ordinary.

Vinayak Vatsal,
Princeton, New Jersey, USA

Briefly

EDWARD BALLS (July 16) seems to have missed a more important political lesson from the Mexican debacle. The government of President Salinas was not prepared to take remedial action because of the closeness of the presidential election. Furthermore, the IMF failed in its surveillance exercise because, while the macroeconomic imbalances were clearly identified over a year before the peso was devalued, they refused to demand policy changes.

Thus the IMF's desire to put politics first and give the governing party (the PRI) a clear run into the election helped the PRI to maintain power, yet cost the country dear in the long run.

Richard Wainwright,
London

DOES Martin Walker (June 25) actually live in the United States or does he merely sit in a room reading mainstream periodicals? There's no "firm new American consensus to cut spending and balance the budget", except among politicians who seek to appear responsible in front of resentful taxpayers. The so-called deficit hawks won't cut, and have in fact just voted to increase the most wasteful government spending of all: military spending.

The US government should be balancing the budget by taxing the wealthy, who've been paying less and less and getting more and more for almost the past two decades.

Glenn Ewva,
Centercach, New York, USA

IN HIS comment on Ellen Goodman's article John Abbott (July 2) compares the usage of the words "Gestapo", "concentration camp" etc. as similes with that of "devil", "paradise" and "heavens". Is he aware that by doing so he casts doubts on the very existence of the Nazi system? And this in such a self-righteous way that at first I would have happily sent him not to a problematic hell but to a very real concentration camp. However, I should rather congratulate him for providing Ellen Goodman with the best of illustrations for her argument.

Amy Gibson,
London

DOUGLAS HURD was more responsible than any other person in the British and French governments for the massacre of the Bosnian Muslims. He opposed every military option to fight the Serbian army and rejected every attempt to lift the arms embargo on the Bosnian Muslims.

As a direct result of his actions, the Muslims in Bosnia were slaughtered. Now the "great statesman" is retiring amid great accolades.

Saleh Chaudhri,
London

The **Guardian Weekly**

July 23, 1995 Vol 153 No 4

Annual subscription rates are £47 (United Kingdom); £52 (Europe inc. Eire); £55 USA and Canada; £60 Rest of World.
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West in disarray over Serbs

Ian Traynor in Vienna, Martin Walker in Washington and John Palmer in Brussels

THE allied attempt to agree on joint armed intervention to halt further Bosnian Serb attacks on United Nations safe havens was on the verge of collapse on Monday.

France described the key military talks as a failure as it emerged that President Bill Clinton had given Congress the right to veto limited but crucial US involvement, including a plan to use US helicopters to lift British and French troops into Gorazde.

Senior US officials judge the differences between the French and British on Bosnia to be "irreconcilable", and have told President Clinton they are "unable to propose any agreed allied action to save the safe havens".

"One of our closest allies wants us to jump in hard, and our other closest ally says it won't be necessary. There is no consensus here to base a policy on," a senior Clinton administration figure told the Guardian on Monday.

As European Union foreign ministers and Russia pondered their options, Britain looked to have triumphed in its manoeuvrings to block French pressure for intervention.

Paris's apparent defeat raised the question of whether France would quit Bosnia in disgust at what it has termed allied appeasement of contemporary European Nazism.

A key meeting in London on Sunday night of British, US and French military chiefs failed to agree on French demands to send Anglo-French troops, backed by US air-power, to reinforce the east Bosnian Muslim pocket of Gorazde, French officials said.

The US made its offer of helicopter gunships and air transport conditional on congressional approval, in the full knowledge that the Republican-controlled Congress is certain to oppose the intervention, diplomatic sources in Washington confirmed. The Senate leader, Robert Dole, is expected to introduce a resolution this week to arm the Bosnian government which, if effected, would mean a UN withdrawal.

Meanwhile, the Bosnian foreign minister, Muhamed Sacirbey, said on a visit to Washington on Monday that the UN mission in Bosnia was "at an end".

He said a letter from his government to the UN saying Bosnia no longer consented to the presence of the UN Protection Force (Unprofor) "may be forthcoming very soon".

"The UN mission will either withdraw voluntarily or at the latest by November we will look for it to be terminated," Mr Sacirbey said. Unprofor's mandate expires in November.

At Sunday's meeting in London, the US also offered the transport hardware provided the helicopters were flown by French or British crews. This bizarre rent-a-chopper, fly-drive plan took little account of the time needed to train pilots and ground crews in their use.

"Things are moving in a discreet fashion against very evident difficulties in reaching an agreed position," a senior western source in Washington said. In plain English: utter disarray within Nato.

Hans van den Broek, the EU foreign affairs commissioner, spoke of the gulf separating Paris and London, but insisted the West had to protect Gorazde.

"The British and French governments are still not properly agreed on what they should be doing. No one wants to go to war but the European Union and the UN must now draw a line in the sand to indicate that, although Srebrenica and Zepa may be lost, we intend to defend Gorazde and the other enclaves," he said at the EU meeting in Brussels.

"It is no use talking about a political agreement at any price. If this does not coincide with justice it will not last long," he added in criticism of stated western policy.

The Russian foreign minister, Andrei Kozyrev, who attended the meeting, warned the West that armed intervention risked "all-out war" in the Balkans.

The British Foreign Secretary, Malcolm Rifkind, said on Monday that US helicopter provision was crucial to any project to reinforce Gorazde. Assuming he was apprised of the outcome of Sunday night's meeting, Mr Rifkind already knew that the US helicopter offer was so hedged with conditions as to be a non-starter. On Sunday, in advance of the military chiefs' meeting, he did not stress the need for US helicopters.

"We want to see Sarajevo resupplied," Mr Rifkind told the BBC on Monday. "If it is seen as a practical military option then there can be no difficulty about giving support to such a proposition."

It appeared from his remarks that the allies' options on Bosnia had narrowed to considering using armour to drive open a free aid route into Sarajevo, although the Serbs could yet render that futile by easing the siege for as long as suits them.

The abdication of the use of force to protect Gorazde could give the green light to the Serbs to move on the third and last east Bosnian enclave to complete their control of all territory between Sarajevo and the Serbian border.

The Serbs, meanwhile, mined UN posts in the imperilled Zepa enclave near Srebrenica and said they would attack the Ukrainian troops stationed there if Nato aircraft interfered with their conquest.

But if the British and the French agree only to use military muscle to break the Sarajevo siege, they could also give the French a face-saving way to stay in Bosnia.

Since the Srebrenica crisis broke last week, the French have been effectively trying to blackmail the US into joining them in tough action in Bosnia, warning that the US would otherwise have to send in even more troops to help the UN withdraw. The French have the biggest UN contingent in Bosnia.

The chairman of the joint chiefs of staff at the Pentagon, General John Shalikashvili, reported back to President Clinton on his talks in London.

US sources reported Gen Shalikashvili as saying it was still possible to get western agreement to force open a land route to lift the siege of Sarajevo and reinforce Gorazde, but only if the US raised its commitment.

Maggie O'Kane, page 12

Numbers up . . . Abdul Talib Harun's 10 wives are escorted to jail last week after their husband, a Singaporean religious teacher, was sentenced to 25 months in jail by a Malaysian court for breaking local laws allowing only four wives. All his wives were given short jail terms

Saddam tells UN to lift Iraq sanctions – or else

David Hirst

PRESIDENT Saddam Hussein on Monday threatened to end all dealings with the United Nations Security Council, and its committee charged with dismantling Iraq's weapons of mass destruction (Unscom), if it did not lift the sanctions it imposed after Iraq's invasion of Kuwait.

But he set no deadline and the threat, less forceful than some Iraqis had expected, was preceded by the release of two US prisoners, a gesture suggesting that he still has hopes that conciliation will pay off or, more likely, that he wants to inspire such hopes in his people. The two Americans, both defence workers, had each been sentenced to eight years in prison after straying across the Iraqi border in March.

Baghdad's ambivalence of policy was accompanied by the president's dismissal on Sunday of Ali Hassan al-Majid, the defence minister, raising doubts about his grip on the ruling apparatus.

Mr Majid — nicknamed "Chemical Ali" for his mass gassing of Kurds — is perhaps the most brutal of the Iraqi leader's henchmen. President Saddam is probably trying to restore an equilibrium within the ruling family that was disturbed by earlier dismissals.

But, unusually, he has publicly humiliated his cousin Mr Majid, who has been demoted to "party duties" as chief of a Baghdad district. He has named no successor, fuelling speculation that this will turn out to be his son Uday, long groomed for the post.

While President Saddam can take comfort from disarray in the Iraqi opposition, he faces growing challenges in the territory he controls. It was presumably Iraqi gunmen who last week killed three members of the Iraqi-backed Iranian opposition movement, the Mojahedin e-Khalq, in Baghdad.

In a speech on the 27th anniversary of the "glorious July revolution", he said: "Iraq can no longer comply with Security Council resolutions or co-operate with Unscom without linking these steps to the lifting of the embargo." Iraq had carried out all the UN demanded of it and it was "high time for the despots responsible for the suffering of our people to respond to what conforms with their own resolutions".

Those sufferings worsened last week when the Security Council renewed the sanctions for another two months. The Iraqi dinar, once worth $3, plunged from 1,200 to the dollar to 1,500. The price of an egg rose from 50 to 80 dinars, and a kilo of sugar from 700 to 2,000 — about two thirds of the salary of low-ranking officials.

"From now on," President Saddam warned, "we shall make no sacrifices that are not reciprocated." But he is ever capable of concessions. After four years of denying it, Iraq has just admitted it had been developing biological weapons.

He also struck a conciliatory note with a pledge to forgive his political opponents. "Anyone who had been lured into deviation by the forces of evil may now depend on God and purge himself of sin by returning to the fold," he promised. This offer was probably an attempt to impress the US, now demanding respect for human rights as well as disarmament as a price for lifting sanctions.

Catalans consign González to slow death

Adela Gooch in Madrid

CATALAN nationalists on Monday withdrew their support from the government of the prime minister, Felipe González, but agreed to work with him until early general elections.

Despite widespread demands for a swift, clean divorce and immediate elections, the Catalan nationalist coalition headed by the regional president, Jordi Pujol, opted for a drawn-out separation and negotiations on an electoral timetable set to culminate in polls next spring.

"We are recovering our freedom of action and will be guided henceforth only by our own policy plans," said a statement issued by the coalition after its executive committee met to review the two-year alliance. The Catalans attributed their decision to the government's "damaging loss of credibility which has had a negative impact on stability".

Ostensibly, Mr Pujol's reasons for not pulling the plug completely on the Socialists are that he wants Spain to see through its European Union presidency, which began this month, without a disruptive election campaign.

The real reasons are more prosaic. He wants to secure his own hold on power, making sure Catalonia's regional election, due before the spring, and the general election do not coincide. At the same time he needs flexibility should another scandal break which makes it impossible for him to support the government.

Mr González admitted last week that the election could be held before the June 1997 deadline, possibly in March. On Monday Mr Pujol reiterated a demand for the poll to be called "immediately after the end of the presidency", adding he would then bring the Catalan elections forward to the autumn.

Weeks of speculation over the Catalans' stance have thus ended in a shaky lifeline for Mr González. He would consider it anathema to see the conservative Popular Party leader, José María Aznar — victor in local elections last May and set to form the next administration — presiding over EU summits. A few months' leeway will also give Mr González time to secure guarantees that he will not be hounded, once out of office, over corruption by members of his administration.

But for many Spaniards, the EU presidency has become a lame excuse for clinging to power. One of the two largest trade unions added its voice over the weekend to those of businessmen, bankers and even former ministers calling for autumn elections and a new, untainted government to give impetus to economic recovery.

Mr Aznar remains adamant he will not back any electoral timetable agreement nor seek a political truce.

Nigeria gives warning to oil companies

Ian Black

TENSION between Britain and Nigeria over repression by the latter's military government increased on Monday when BP and Shell were warned that their oil interests would be jeopardised if London continued to be "hostile".

The threat came as Britain stepped up political pressure on Nigeria over a secret trial of alleged coup plotters, demanding it set a timetable for a return to civilian rule before the Commonwealth summit in Auckland in November.

Dan Etete, Nigeria's oil minister, summoned the heads of the two companies to issue the warning as the Foreign Office minister, Jeremy Hanley, said General Sani Abacha's government was flouting a commitment by Commonwealth members to democratic rule.

"There is widespread concern in the Commonwealth about continued military government in West Africa," Mr Hanley told Parliament in London. He agreed with earlier comments by Baroness Chalker, the overseas aid minister, that Gen Abacha might not be welcome at the Auckland conference.

Nigeria announced last week that a military tribunal had sentenced 40 people, including former head of state General Olusegun Obasanjo, for plotting to overthrow Gen Abacha on March 1.

Mr Etete said: "In as much as our doors are open to foreign investors, we will not be dictated to by anybody nor allow our sovereignty to be subjected to slavery. The federal government will no longer tolerate any personal attack on the head of state, General Sani Abacha, or on the Nigerian government by the British government."

Shell produces about half of Nigeria's crude oil output of about two million barrels per day. In 1979, Nigeria banned BP and nationalised its assets in a row with Britain. The ban was lifted in 1991, and BP and Norway's Statoil have a joint oil-exploration venture in Nigeria.

On Monday the United States urged Nigeria's military rulers to commute any death sentences on the alleged coup plotters. "The secret trials . . . are inconsistent with due process," a state department spokesman said in a statement.

It is still not clear what the sentences are, although there have been widespread reports of the death penalty.

"We urge the head of state Sani Abacha and the Provisional Ruling Council to exercise their prerogative of clemency by commuting any death sentences that may have been proposed," the state department spokesman, Nicholas Burns, said.

Washington has repeatedly called on Nigeria to respect human rights and its stated commitment to due process by providing fair and open trials for anyone detained for or charged with criminal conduct.



As old as you feel . . . South Africa's President Nelson Mandela enjoys a party with more than 2,000 children in Johannesburg on Monday to celebrate his 77th birthday PHOTOGRAPH: JUDA NGWENYA

EU attacks French nuclear tests plan

John Palmer in Brussels and Christopher Zinn in Sydney

THE international campaign against France's decision to resume nuclear tests in the South Pacific gained force on Monday when European Union foreign ministers demanded that President Jacques Chirac reverse his stand and cancel all tests.

The French government found itself without allies when a succession of EU foreign ministers lined up at a meeting in Brussels to attack President Chirac's nuclear policy.

The French foreign minister, Hervé de Charette, appeared shaken by the force of the protests. The attack was led by the Swedish and Irish foreign ministers, who warned that the proposed eight nuclear tests not only threatened the environment in the South Pacific, but might endanger an international test ban treaty. Seven foreign ministers spoke against the French policy and none defended it.

In Tokyo, the Japanese finance minister, Masayoshi Takemura, said on Monday that Japan should renew its protest against the testing and should boycott French products. "Demonstrations, signature-collecting campaigns and boycotting. These are all great things to do," he said. "In a show of protest, let us grandly get on board a ship and stand in the way. As a politician, I promise to take the lead."

New Zealand last week threatened to send its navy to protect a flotilla of MPs who are planning to blockade the nuclear test site at Mururoa atoll, as protests against a French resumption of testing escalated across the Pacific.

New Zealand's prime minister, Jim Bolger, said there was growing support for the unofficial "peace" flotilla of more than 30 MPs from both sides of the New Zealand and Australian parliaments. "If that does happen and some MPs join them, we would look at whether some naval vessel should be there for support and security," Mr Bolger said.

The bitter fallout from the resumption of testing descended on French diplomatic garden parties around the world as they celebrated Bastille Day last week. Embassy compounds were stormed by Greenpeace protesters, French products were boycotted, and the Norwegian actress Liv Ullmann announced she was returning a prestigious film medal to Paris.

The popular backlash against France provoked widespread demonstrations and disruption in countries bordering the south Pacific, where the first of eight nuclear devices is due to be detonated at Mururoa in September.

Anti-nuclear "commandos" staged raids on the offices of French companies around Sydney, while in Adelaide a Renault wreck, described as a French "bomb" and covered with more than 5,000 signatures, was taken to the steps of Parliament House. The French ambassador's Bastille Day party in Canberra went ahead amid tight security, but Australian politicians and many South Pacific diplomats stayed away.

As trade unions began a 24-hour ban on servicing all French commercial flights, the ambassador, Dominique Girard, claimed Australians were reacting as though war had been declared. France has "been treated a little bit out of proportion to the problem".

At the Sydney rally, which attracted 10,000 protesters, speakers urged Paul Keating, the prime minister, to join New Zealand and send an unarmed naval vessel to join a planned peace flotilla sailing into the test site.

In Suva, Fiji's capital, 2,500 protesters marched on the French embassy and presented a 50,000-signature petition.

Greenpeace demonstrators in London leapt over railings and invaded the French ambassador's residence next to Hyde Park.

But the protests were most explosive in Germany. A mushroom-shaped nuclear cloud appeared outside the French consulate in Hamburg, as German activists jeered and waved banners declaring "Shame for Europe — save Polynesia" and "Stop nuclear testing".

Despite President Chirac's repeated claims that his decision on the nuclear tests is "irreversible", some EU officials on Monday claimed that a partial French retreat was possible. "The pressure really is on President Chirac now. He did not expect the level of hostility, not only in the southern hemisphere, but among fellow EU governments," one official said.

The former French prime minister, Michel Rocard, said in Wellington on Monday that the decision to resume nuclear testing was a disaster. He said Mr Chirac's position was "lonely and arrogant" and was opposed by the majority of French people. "I think the growth of the protest is for Mr Chirac a problem. A good solution would be to stop," he said.

Le Monde, page 13
Washington Post, page 17

Plea for Kashmir captives

Suzanne Goldenberg in New Delhi

GUERRILLAS holding two Britons and three other western tourists hostage in Kashmir said that they would not extend Monday night's deadline to kill the men, as their captives made a frantic plea to India and their governments to help free them.

"The government does not seem to be prepared for any purposeful talks," the kidnappers, who have claimed responsibility on behalf of the previously unknown al-Faran group, said in a statement. The group said it would not be fooled by the government's efforts to buy time. "They can be killed at any time after the expiry of the deadline."

However, an Indian intelligence source said on Monday that the renewal of the threat was a bargaining strategy to keep Kashmir on the international agenda and to force New Delhi to release 21 militants held in Indian jails.

Earlier that day, the kidnappers released an audio cassette with recorded messages from one of the Britons, Paul Wells, the American Donald Hutchings, and the Norwegian Hans-Christian Ostro.

Mr Wells's voice was faint. "We have been climbing mountains. We are very tired. We are okay. The mojahedin are looking after us well but we don't know what will happen to us now," he said. He added: "The Indian government does not seem to be sorting out the situation."

Mr Hutchings spoke directly to his wife, Jane Shelley. "Jane, I want to let you know I am okay. I do not know today I will die or tomorrow I will die. I do not know what will happen. I appeal to the American government and the Indian government for help."

The other two hostages are London electrician Keith Mangan and a German, Dirk Hasert. The five were kidnapped nearly two weeks ago in three separate raids in the Pahalgam region, east of Srinagar.

Global population 'could double by 2050'

John Gittings

SIGNIFICANT changes in human life during the next century are predicted in a United Nations report which warns that the world population could double by 2050.

The UN Population Fund (UNFPA) annual survey says the most optimistic estimate is that the current total of 5.7 billion will rise rapidly to 7.1 billion in the next 20 years. The rate of growth should then slow down to give a total of 7.8 billion by the middle of the 21st century.

But it warns that, without much greater efforts at education and family planning, these predictions could be wildly wrong. The high prediction for the year 2050 is 11.9 billion.

The report stresses that "reproductive health" is one of the keys to checking population growth. UNFPA is alarmed by fresh evidence that "illness and injury as a result of pregnancy are much more prevalent than was previously thought". Although fewer women are dying during pregnancy and childbirth, the mortality rates are 15 to 50 times higher in the developing world than in most developed countries.

Countries where maternal mortality is higher than 1,000 per 100,000 live births include Ghana, Somalia, Mali and Bhutan. In Cambodia the rate is a phenomenal 9,000. The average rate in developed regions is 30 deaths per 100,000 live births, against an average of 420 for all developing countries.

The new evidence shows that a third of all disease in women in the developing world is related to pregnancy, childbirth, abortion, HIV and reproductive tract infections.

Next century's world will be increasingly urbanised. By the year 2015, nearly 56 per cent of the population will live in urban areas, against less than 45 per cent at present.

In real terms this means that the world's urban population will grow by half — from 2.6 billion to 3.9 billion — in 20 years.

The increase will be particularly sharp in many developing countries as people leave the countryside and migrate to the towns.

The State of World Population, 1995, available from UN Population Fund, 220 East 42nd Street, New York, NY10017, USA

The Week

PRESIDENT Boris Yeltsin, who was taken to hospital early last week with chest pains, has extended his stay in hospital and called off a trip to Norway.

A TAMIL rebel lorry laden with explosives blew up in northern Sri Lanka killing more than 160 people, mostly civilians, state radio said. The Red Cross could not confirm the report.

REFRIGERATED lorries were being used to store bodies at Chicago's Cook County morgue after the death toll from the heat wave sweeping much of the mid-western United States reached more than 200.

THE Burmese military has asked for a permanent role in governing the country — an early sign of its intransigence as negotiations get under way on a new constitution that is being drafted by a committee handpicked by the military regime.

ISRAEL'S deputy defence minister and former army chief of staff, Mordechai Gur, shot himself at his Tel Aviv home. He had cancer and reportedly left a note saying he no longer wanted to be a burden to his family.

EIGHTEEN Sri Lankans were found dead in a Bulgarian truck near Gyoer in western Hungary. They had apparently suffocated in a sealed vehicle. Police said it was "a case of people-smuggling".

LAWYERS defending Turkey's foremost novelist, Yashar Kemal, failed to have the case against him suspended or referred to the constitutional court. He is on trial because of an article over the Turkish authorities' war on Kurdish guerrillas.

A SERIES of explosions rocked one of the Brazilian navy's biggest munitions dumps, a small island off Rio de Janeiro. Some 40 houses were said to have been destroyed.

A £1 BILLION plan to save Europe from a second Chernobyl disaster, by demolishing the dangerous remains of the Soviet reactor that exploded in 1986, has been put forward by a consortium that includes the British firm AEA Technology.

A THAI court has ordered the extradition of Thanong Siriprechapong, a former MP, to face charges of drug smuggling in the United States.

AN unnamed Milwaukee private detective, described as the first "electronic vigilante", posed on the Internet as a 14-year-old girl to ensnare paedophile computer users. Her message led to the arrest of a Las Vegas truck driver.

CIA lifts veil on Rosenbergs

Jonathan Freedland in Washington

REVELATIONS by the United States' intelligence establishment have shed light on one of the most notorious espionage cases of the century, but doubt remains whether Ethel Rosenberg — executed for betraying US nuclear secrets to the Soviet Union — was guilty.

Breaking a 50-year silence, the Central Intelligence Agency has lifted the veil on the élite code-breaking team that exposed Ethel and Julius Rosenberg and an enormous Soviet spy ring bent on stealing US atomic technology.

The CIA has released 49 documents from its "Venona" project, which intercepted and decoded KGB cable traffic during the 1940s. The discoveries led to the conviction of the Rosenbergs, whose electrocution in 1953 remains a controversial and enduring symbol of the communist-baiting fervour of the 1950s.

Julius Rosenberg appears to have been one of up to 200 spies whose target was the Manhattan Project, the US effort to build an atomic bomb. Ethel Rosenberg's role is more vague. In a 1944 message from New York to Moscow, she is described as a "fellow countryman" and said to be fully aware of her "husband's work". But it says that, because of her "delicate health", she "does not work".

David Kahn, an eminent historian of US code-breaking, said: "The Venona intercepts show without a doubt that the Rosenbergs spied for the Soviet Union against the United States." But others focused on the KGB admission that Ethel Rosenberg did "not work".

The Venona documents provide a gripping insight into one of the most intriguing episodes of the cold war. Using mere brain power, a team of linguists and experts laboured for three years before making a breakthrough. They eventually discovered that the Russians had developed a complex numerical system designed to be varied with each usage. They slipped up when they began repeating themselves, enabling the Venona team to detect a pattern.

The 49 messages are the first of some 2,200 to be made public in the coming year as part of President Clinton's drive for greater disclosure of espionage history.

● Following controversy surrounding the CIA's connection with the murder of a US citizen, Michael Devine, in Guatemala in 1990, the agency faces more questions about murder and human rights abuses by its clients and allies in central America — this time in Honduras. The new investigations surround allegations that a US-born Catholic priest, Francis Carney, was thrown from a helicopter by the Honduran army in 1983.

Republicans to capitalise on the Clintons' problems



The US this week

Martin Walker

PRESIDENT CLINTON faces an embarrassing and difficult week. Whatever the distractions of Bosnia and the extraordinary deterioration of US relations with China, his main attention will be drawn to two hearings on Capitol Hill. The Senate begins its public inquiry into the tangled Whitewater affair, and the House judiciary committee launches its own eight days of hearings into the tragic outcome of the siege of the Branch Davidian cult at Waco.

The two hearings will have one name in common, that of Vince Foster. A boyhood friend of Clinton from Hope, Arkansas, and later a partner of Hillary Clinton in the Rose law firm in Little Rock, Foster came to Washington as Clinton's deputy White House counsel. His death, apparently by suicide on July 20, 1993, has sparked an extraordinary range of conspiracy theories, which are marked more by the readiness to believe absolutely anything of the Clintons than by any convincing evidence.

The conspiracy theories range from an alleged affair with Mrs Clinton to Foster's alleged work for Israeli intelligence, from his secret trips to Swiss banks in Geneva to his reputed role in helping the ill-fated Bank of Credit and Commerce International buy into the US banking market. It has been claimed that his suicide was faked, that he was murdered elsewhere and his body shifted to Fort Marcy park near the CIA headquarters, just across the Potomac river from Washington. There is dark talk of hit squads hired by the narco-millionaires of Arkansas, of cocaine being shipped into the state's Mena airport on the planes that took out covert arms supplies to the Nicaraguan contras.

These tales circulate on the Internet, through videotapes marketed by powerful religious groups on their cable TV channels, through a network of research groups and think-tanks whose allegations are constantly fed into the public discourse by the rightwing radio talk shows. They are promoted by a band of dedicated and hostile conservative journalists and activists who are convinced that Bill and Hillary Clinton are wickedness personified. They see the Clintons as the *capos* of an Arkansas mafia which will not stop at serial murder to preserve their power.

Whatever the truth of all this, Foster is the central focus for most of the conspiracy theories and for this week's congressional hearings. His death is being investigated by the special counsel Kenneth Starr along with the rest of the Whitewater affair. But there is no doubt that Foster was deeply involved in trying to clean up the legal and financial mess of the failed Whitewater property venture. He kept the Clinton's personal files on Whitewater in his office, the corporate papers and tax records, and the letters from the Clintons' accountant warning that the paperwork was in chaos.

On the night of his death, before the park police were allowed to search Foster's office, his boss, the then White House counsel Bernard Nussbaum, along with other senior Clinton staff, reviewed the files to establish what should be protected from a police inquiry on the grounds of executive privilege. One such document was Foster's list of proposed Supreme Court nominees. The question is, what happened to the papers, and did the work of the Clinton staff amount to an obstruction of justice. Or, as the Republican senator Alfonse D'Amato put it, when announcing this week's hearings, "What have they got to hide?"

The Clintons tried to clear the air last week, releasing to the press and public the contents of Foster's Whitewater file, and also releasing Foster's personal papers. These suggest that Foster was far, far more concerned with the embarrassment of the White House travel office than he ever was with Whitewater. The travel office staff had been fired when the Clintons came in, and their work taken over by a distant cousin of Clinton whose Little Rock travel agency had handled the travel arrangements for the Clinton campaign. The firing of the old travel office staff was an ugly business, with claims of fraud and kickbacks, and Foster's papers contain a number of anguished notes to Mrs Clinton about the potential embarrassment of it all.

So in the attempt to squash one set of scandalous rumours, the Clintons are exposing themselves to new ones. And they will not succeed in scotching the Whitewater inquiries, because the upcoming hearings will see some pungently contradictory testimony about Foster's papers.

Mrs Clinton's chief of staff, Maggie Williams, will deny on oath that she removed a box of papers from his office on the night of Foster's death. A Secret Service guard, and other witnesses, will say that they saw her carry the box away. Ms Williams volunteered to take a lie detector test on this matter for the special counsel, and was deemed to be telling the truth. This will not prevent the Republican senators pointing out the discrepancy in testimony.

This hearing will take place before Senator D'Amato's banking committee, because of the assumption that the Whitewater venture helped bankrupt the Madison Guaranty savings and loan, which was run by the Clinton's partner in Whitewater, Jim McDougal.

But this has become a doughnut of a story, with a hole in the middle. The Clintons' original Whitewater investment and the bankruptcy of Madison Guaranty have just been the subject of a $3.6 million inquiry by the Resolution Trust Corporation (RTC). This is the government-funded body which bailed out the bankrupt savings and loan industry, when hundreds of them across the country went bust after fevered speculation in property in the 1980s.

A Republican lawyer, Jay Stevens, sacked by Clinton from his post as District Attorney in Washington DC, was hired to see whether the RTC might have a case for civil damages against the Clintons. Although the Clintons feared he would prove partisan, Mr Stevens's report concluded that the Clintons had told the truth all along, that they had been passive investors who lost money, and he found no evidence of the Whitewater account being used to launder funds, or to loot Madison Guaranty.



Under fire . . . Federal agents after their first, botched assault on the Waco compound in Texas

This will not stop the Republican Senate inquiry, nor the conspiracy theories, nor the heaping embarrassments of it all for the Clintons. While the Senate banking committee hammers away at the fate of Vince Foster's Whitewater papers, the House judiciary committee will simultaneously be looking at Foster's role in the Waco disaster, when more than 80 members of the Branch Davidian cult died in a conflagration at their Texas compound in April 1993.

This will be nasty because the American gun lobby is hoping to turn the Waco hearings into a public condemnation of the federal government agents who besieged the compound as "jack-booted thugs".

"I fear some may try to use these hearings to serve another agenda, to erode public support for federal firearms laws," warned Treasury Secretary Robert Rubin, who is the cabinet member responsible for the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms (BATF), four of whose armed agents died in the first, botched assault on the Waco compound.

THE Republicans on the committee have a further political agenda, to explore the role of two key figures in the Whitewater affair in the decision to launch the fateful assault on Waco. Two of Clinton's closest allies from Arkansas, former assistant attorney-general Webster Hubbell (now serving a 21-month jail sentence for fraud), and Foster took part in the crucial meetings at the Justice Department where the raid was planned. Mr Hubbell was another partner at the Rose law firm.

"No one is above the law, and we need to hold people accountable," said Congressman Bill Zeliff, a Republican from New Hampshire, who will chair the hearings and lead the quizzing of Attorney-General Janet Reno, who ordered the attack that ended the 51-day siege.

"We want to know whether Janet Reno really decided all by herself whether we should use CS gas, whether she took it on herself to make all the decisions that added to this tragedy. We'd like to find out who she went to for advice," he said.

The committee threatened to subpoena Clinton's own notes and papers on the raid, but settled for the chance to read the notes but not copy them when the White House claimed executive privilege. The committee has focused on four main issues in preparing for what is expected to be a highly contentious inquiry into the tragedy.

First, they want to know why the BATF staged its first armed raid on the cult compound on February 28, to arrest David Koresh on firearms charges, when the local sheriff said Koresh could have been calmly arrested at any time. The committee suspects the bureau wanted a successful operation to prevent it being re-organised out of existence in Clinton's "reinventing government" process.

Second, they want to know why in its final assault at Waco on April 19, 1993, the FBI used tanks to drench the compound with CS gas. This was just after the US government had signed the international chemical warfare treaty which barred its use.

Third, they want to know the basis for Ms Reno's claim that she ordered the final assault because "children are being abused inside the compound", and her subsequent claim that the Branch Davidians had "48 machine-guns in there". The NRA firearms experts have suggested that entirely legal assault rifles, which can fire only one shot at a time, had been tampered with after the raid to turn them into automatics. The committee staff believe that either Foster or Hubbell told Reno about the child abuse, knowing that her own difficult childhood history would make her acutely sensitive to such a claim.

Fourth, they want to explore whether the FBI and other federal agencies are getting out of hand, as the gun lobby and the controversial civilian militias now claim. They were given further evidence for this last week, when the FBI removed its deputy director Larry Potts, who was promoted after being the FBI agent in charge of the Waco operation.

In short, some accusations by the militia groups and conspiracy theorists over the FBI's role would appear to have some basis. This is more than enough to whet the appetites of those militia stalwarts who maintain that the Clinton administration is about to hand over the country to Russian troops and turn the United States into a servile protectorate of the United Nations, complete with concentration camps and FBI sweeps to confiscate all privately-held guns.

IT IS all very outlandish, and yet the Whitewater affair is about to get deadly serious for the Clintons. This has little to do with the facts of the various cases, and everything to do with politics. For the first time, a hostile Congress will publicly interrogate a White House it perceives as the enemy. The political battle lines automatically promote a small ill-fated investment in a remote tract of Arkansas river bank into the ominous company of Watergate, Iran-Contra and Iraqgate.

Each of those scandals had one key feature in common: they pitted the president of one party in direct confrontation with a Congress dominated by the other. The congressional hearings for Richard Nixon's Watergate affair, for the Reagan White House's defiance of a congressional ban on funding the Nicaraguan contras, and for George Bush's support of $3 billion in food trade credits for Iraq before the invasion of Kuwait, became political tilt-yards. The original crimes or errors were quickly overtaken by the clash of prerogatives between the legislature and the executive.

The greatest danger to Bill Clinton this summer is the pride of Congress, and its determination to act as judge and jury of any presidential wrongdoing. Add to that congressional prerogative an intensely partisan Republican party, itching to do to a Democratic president what Democrats did to the Republican Presidents Nixon, Reagan and Bush, and the stage is set for a drama of constitutional intensity.

China crushes a dream of freedom

A Special Correspondent in Lhasa reports on the black despair that is slowly eroding Buddhist prayer and patience

THE MOMENT is suddenly lyrical as Lamrim Rimpoche adjusts a pair of thick glasses attached to a length of grubby string around his ears, and in a voice as sweet as crumpled rose leaves imparts wisdom to his young charges.

Seated on a platform, the reincarnate lama and abbot of Drepung Monastery is reading Buddhist texts to 200 apprentice monks. In the courtyard outside, a juniper tree shades the stooped sage from the fierce Himalayan sun. The leaves dapple the wooden benches. Motes of dust dance in the light. In the evening cool, the cheerful monks will gather at the juniper to debate Lamrim's interpretation of the texts.

But outside the monastery walls, the view is far from comforting. On July 6 Tibetans marked the Dalai Lama's 60th birthday. The authorities ordered senior abbots not to allow monks to leave the monastery on the day, and abbots were ordered to enforce the ban on two prayers.

The prayers — Words Of Truth, written by the Dalai Lama, and Long Life — praise Tibetans' courage and call for self-determination. "They can ban whatever they like, but they will never know what I am praying for or what I am saying quietly to myself," one young monk says.

But while Lhasa's Tibetan people hold symbolic protests, another reality is being played out in the main streets. Businessmen from Singapore and France are arriving to clinch deals, and younger Tibetans are learning survival under "Chinese capitalism". Discos, nightclubs, restaurants and clothes shops, all owned by young Tibetans, are sprouting up. For these budding entrepreneurs, the spirit of rebellion has given way to realism.

The hard fact is that the Chinese have been here for four decades, and show no signs of going. The 30th anniversary of the founding of the Tibet Autonomous Region on September 1, 1965, the truncated Tibet ruled by quislings, is approaching. In the past few weeks, the Chinese authorities have stepped up their oppression.

"Everyone is so nervous here, no one knows what the Chinese are going to do next," a Lhasa shopkeeper says. "They have completely destroyed the underground movement. All the nuns and monks are terrified."

According to human rights monitors, Beijing's henchmen in Tibet have one of the world's most frightening records for abuse of rights. At least 110 monks and nuns have been rounded up this year. Nearly 100 were detained last year for political crimes — offences which carry an average prison term of six years.

Amnesty International says at least 628 political prisoners are behind bars in Tibet, compared with 400 in late 1993. A third are women, and 45 are children.

Beatings, electric shocks, deprivation of food and drink, exposure to cold, handcuffing or shackling for long periods and denial of medical treatment are reported to be common during interrogation, according to Amnesty. Twelve political prisoners have died from torture since 1987. Religion, the channel of nationalist aspirations, bears the brunt of China's repression. Tibet has 1,680 monasteries and 40,000 monks and nuns; no new monasteries are to be built, nor further novices admitted.

The Dalai Lama: warned of revolt against Chinese rule

For the young Tibetan, there is no hope or comfort in the life imposed by the Chinese, other than the distractions of kung-fu films and karaoke parlours.

The official version is much different. China says Tibet has been part of its territory since the 13th century, before it came under foreign influence and then "feudal" rule. Since Tibet returned to Beijing's sovereignty in the 1950s, according to this version, a backward, economically crippled region has made giant strides.

Last year, China's President Jiang Zemin approved $287 million in long-term investment in 62 Stalinist-type projects — dams, power stations, bridges, roads and two Communist Party buildings — the largest infusion of state aid in Tibet to date. Away from the riverside picnics and the stilled reverence of the monasteries and former palaces, business deals are being done. Chinese investors have opened at least 15 two-star hotels in Lhasa in the past 12 months; a five-star hotel complex is being built on an island in the Lhasa River; and a Chinese-Macau joint venture plans to open a casino in Lhasa. The authorities are using Tibet's tourist boom — revenue soared by 23 per cent last year — to woo Asian businessmen.

BUT TIBETANS say they are excluded from the boom as many of the contracts are going to companies owned by the People's Liberation Army or the People's Armed Police, the militia. These are the real sources of power in the Tibet Autonomous Region: a permanent garrison of an estimated 65,000 men.

Race relations between the Han (ethnic Chinese) and Tibetans have long been troubled and the arrival of Chinese entrepreneurs — taking advantage of the less competitive market in Tibet — has inflamed the situation. China says 94 per cent of the population is ethnic Tibetan, but pro-independence groups estimate that the influence of Chinese colonisation is such that the true figure is about 50 per cent.

The influx of Han has become so institutionalised that new migrants arriving at Lhasa airport are greeted by rows of Chinese children chanting: "Welcome! Warmly welcome! Cadres from the interior! Come to build the frontier!"

Worried that Tibetans can no longer be trusted, China is recruiting party cadres and retired military staff and sending them to Tibet. By the September 1 anniversary, every mayor, political commisar and Communist Party secretary will be Chinese, sources in Lhasa say.

In this beautiful yet ravaged country, a state of psychic sickness can be felt among a people denied everything except that which the Chinese cannot take: their dreams and prayers.

Among young Tibetans, who have grown up knowing nothing except Chinese rule, the black despair is palpable and many are tempted by violence. In the past four years, there has been a marked increase in murder and armed robbery by Tibetans. Sources in Lhasa blame the harsher society on the destruction of hundreds of homes in the centre of the city — which has fragmented the traditional community links — and the cut-throat competition for jobs. Their society has changed more in the past three years of rapid economic restructuring and modernisation than in the previous 15.

Last March, the Dalai Lama gave a warning of a violent revolt against Chinese rule unless Beijing agreed to talks on greater autonomy. But violence is not an option for the Tibetans. They are Buddhist; but they know the Chinese military is ruthless. The Dalai Lama seems realistic about what possibilities there are for the Tibetan cause in this reincarnation by scaling down demands and suggesting an autonomous region, with China responsible for its foreign and defence policy. "In my efforts to seek a negotiated solution to our problem, I have refrained from asking for the complete independence of Tibet," he told the German parliament last month.

Tsering Shakya, a Tibetan historian in London, says: "Everything depends on what is going to happen in China and whether the situation remains stable or not. If a more liberal regime is established in China, then there will be some scope for change in Tibet. But at the moment that is very difficult to envisage."

In terms of strategy, the Tibetans must build on two fronts. They have huge sympathy all around the world, but few political allies — none strong enough, or resolute enough, to take on China. They have to promote their cause in the court of world opinion.

But they must also become a thorn in Beijing's side, ensuring that China pays the price for occupying Tibet in terms of the cost of the garrison, the subsidising of Chinese settlers, and the damage to international prestige. To a Western-educated realist, that road seems so terribly long that no modern measure of time could say when Tibetans will be able to determine their own lives.

Even for Tibetans, there seem to be limits to Buddhist patience, and the visitor is left wondering when Chinese brutality will cause a gut revolt, a mad uprising — and a bloodbath to equal that in Tiananmen Square six years ago.

"We will wait for our moment, you'll see," says a woman stallholder in the Barkor, the Tibetan heart of Lhasa. "As soon as we can, we'll regroup, demonstrate and drive the Chinese out."

Shakya says that any uprising would result in slaughter. "China has said that if Tibet demands independence it will use force to stop it. It doesn't matter if it is a liberal or hardline regime in Beijing, the Chinese will use force to crush any move for Tibetan independence."
— *The Observer*

Washington Post, page 17

GUARDIAN WEEKLY
July 23 1995

For whom does the bell toll now?

The British left buried its differences to fight fascism in Spain, but is now divided on how to react over Bosnia.
Ed Vulliamy reports

SIXTY years ago, Generalissimo Franco, backed by the Axis powers, assaulted the Spanish Republic. The response on the left in Europe and America was famously unequivocal: it buried the nit-picking differences and rallied to the cause, the defeat of fascism. Thousands put their lives where their mouths were, and fought.

It took time for the British left to absorb what was going on. The Labour party was wary, opposed to intervening in another country's business. Although the International Brigades answered the call, the Republic fought alone, and perished. In three years, there was a replay of the interventionist debate, over Czechoslovakia, and the word appeasement replaced non-intervention in the diplomatic vocabulary, courtesy of a Conservative government and a promise made in Munich.

Last week, the Serbian nationalist juggernaut rolled again, into the worst ethnic cleansing since the terrifying summer of 1992. The Government's response has been, predictably, *laissez*-bloodbath. The more curious reaction has been on the left, where there have been remarkable displays of political acrobatics throughout the Bosnian war.

Bosnia is deemed too complicated to understand, a war hidden from comprehension by Balkan history. Any attempt to simplify the war into a tragedy of aggression, resistance and betrayal is muddied by pedantry and disinformation, usually from UN sources (as in "the Muslims bombed their own marketplace . . ."). On the British left, the confusion falls on willing ears, for in this — it is said — there is nothing so simple as Spain in the thirties. The savagery provokes cacophonous views: some even speak as political ambassadors for ethnic violence. "The result," says Calum MacDonald, Labour MP for the Western Isles, "is that the left has miserably failed Bosnia." In Sarajevo, Tuzla and what is left of rural Bosnia, the victims understandably define the concentration camps, the forced movement of populations, the destruction of communities — and what is happening in Srebrenica — as fascism. "If a systematic programme to destroy a people and their history *isn't* fascism," said Brigadier Selmo Cikotic, former commander in central Bosnia, now military attaché in Washington, "then I don't know what is."

That view is shared by titans of British radicalism such as Michael Foot, who brands Bosnia "the great anti-fascist war of your generation". The young Calum MacDonald sees Bosnia as "Spain, Abyssinia and Czechoslovakia rolled into one. It is as clear to me how the left should react to Bosnia, as it was to Hitlerism in the thirties." These are not the thirties — when those who travelled hopefully felt able to stake a claim in the future — but years of ambition rather than risk, of hesitant complexity rather than simple goals. The very words left and right are melting into each other.

The Labour Party has splintered over Bosnia, "although most", says MacDonald, "are apathetic. I despair that the left thinks in terms of what is trendy. It was trendy to campaign for the abolition of apartheid in South Africa, but not to oppose the creation of apartheid in Europe."

In Parliament, it was left to Paddy Ashdown's Liberals to speak for Bosnia, her victims, and to urge action in their defence, while Labour imitated the Government in crisis management through empty bluff. The partnership of Jack Cunningham (shadow foreign) and David Clark (shadow defence) was anti-interventionist, treating it as civil war between barbarians.

The shadow defence team is the most sceptical, with John Reid arguing that Serbs had legitimate grievances, wary of what he regarded as Islamic influence in Bosnia. (Where attendance at mosque was 3 per cent, where "Muslims" drink brandy with their bacon.) When Robin Cook became shadow foreign secreteary, Labour's voice changed. Cook argued that Bosnia is riven between warring principles, and set down codes to replace the fixation with maps and partition. Among MPs, there are supporters of the Sarajevo government, most wanting tougher intervention on Bosnia's behalf: MacDonald, Ken Livingstone, Chris Mullin and Peter Mandelson. Then there are neutrals: Tony Benn, Dennis Skinner, Diane Abbott, Bob Waring.

These last are the entourage of the Committee for Peace in the Balkans, formed last month to oppose further commitment of troops and bringing together members of Labour's left, CND — and Sir Alfred Sherman. Tony Benn says it is "a peace movement". It won't hear criticism of Serbian pogroms in Bosnia, and refuses to call them such.

Sections of the British left stubbornly believe "nothing can be done" about the slaughter: they range from genteel Fabian salons to the muscular hard left, from the revolutionary fringes to the front benches. They have blended little-Englandism, anti-imperialism, appeasement, an idea that whoever governs in Belgrade must by tradition be socialist, and a basic belief that whatever the Americans think must be wrong — and America is deemed to support Bosnia.

UNDERLYING this is nostalgia for the second world war — with animosity towards Croatia, coupled with instinctive affection for our war-time ally, Belgrade. The Serbian Nazi puppet regime and the royalist support for Hitler are overlooked.

Benn is angry that in compiling its guest lists for VE Day, "the British government invited the Croatians, who fought on the Nazi side, and they didn't invite Serbia, which was our ally". There is keen hostility towards modern Germany. Skinner brings a conversation about Bosnia back to his theme of "the German high command" scheming within the EU and the Balkans to establish "the new German empire".

Benn believes "the break-up of Yugoslavia was a deliberate act of German policy to re-assert control in the Balkans . . . starting with the unilateral recognition of Croatia". The Bosnian cause is seen as inseparable from that of Croatia, though the Muslim-Croat federation was prefaced by 16 months of war in which Zagreb helped the Bosnian Croats try to annex their slice of Bosnia, supplying heavy weapons for the siege of Mostar's Muslim enclave.

There is inevitable identification with Tito's Yugoslavia, for some reason embodied by present-day Serbia. Skinner says, "I would like to see a return to old Yugoslavia." So would most Bosnians on the government side — Serb, Croat and Muslim. They regard the ethnically pluralist country for which they fight as heir to Tito's republic. "It was not Bosnia that seceded from the *idea* of Yugoslavia," says Brigadier Cikotic, "Serbia did that."

But the crucial left premise is a refusal among the neutrals to acknowledge any difference of scale between atrocities committed by the combatants. Exactly reflecting the Government's treatment of aggressor and victim as equals, this is the doctrine of "moral equivalence", rejected by the UN Commission on War Crimes under Dr Cherif Boussani, which was not alone in blaming nationalist Serbs for most war crimes.

But for the neutrals, the ethnic cleansing across Bosnia, the camps, the bombardment of Sarajevo are compared with "Muslim atrocities". Such atrocities have occurred — a few isolated, wild excursions out of Gorazde and Srebrenica.

"Are you suggesting that there haven't been atrocities on both sides?" barks Skinner. "It's happening on all sides, and there is ethnic cleansing right here, of miners in the pits, so don't tell me about ethnic cleansing."

Not all the new group are willing to discuss their views. Diane Abbott, another sponsor, refused to explain her affiliation. "It baffles and depresses me," says MacDonald. "This is so obviously our cause, the fight against fascism on our doorstep."

Out on the revolutionary left, there is teeming debate: this time round, the line is anti-interventionist, in some sects even pro-Serbian, in others staunchly pro-Bosnian. The group most adept at winning Channel 4 airspace is the Revolutionary Communist Party, whose Balkan specialist Joan Phillips says that "our criticism of the West is that it has intervened too much," and that "this is a civil war. . . I do not accept for a minute that the Serbs should be singled out as responsible".

THIS IS hotly challenged by the Workers Revolutionary Party, which urges resistance to Karadzic to avert "the first victory for fascism in Europe since the Third Reich". The group's paper is one of the few crannies of British coverage recording those Serbs who remain loyal to and fight for what is called the Muslim side. The latest Workers Press carries an enthusiastic review of a new book called Genocide In Bosnia, acknowledging that the author is "not a socialist. Indeed, he is a professor of national security studies at the US Marine school of advanced war-fighting!"

"In some ways," concludes Michael Foot, "the ethnic cleansing in Bosnia is worse than Franco in Spain. Franco destroyed socialists and liberals. But this is a doctrine with a *racial* basis . . . So the non-interventionists are even more culpable than they were in the thirties. If there had not been those non-interventionists on the left then I have no doubt that the Spanish republic would have survived."

Bojan Zec — mixed Serbian, Jewish and Muslim, a real Bosnian — said in Sarajevo two years ago: "For us, this is a war against fascism. For us, Sarajevo is the Madrid of our time, but not for you! Perhaps the failure to help us generated your attitude. Your anti-fascist war came and went, and you did nothing. Therefore you have to call it anything but an anti-fascist war, and to leave us alone to face the fascism of our day."

"Did you pick up a gun and fight?" says Dennis Skinner down the telephone. Fair challenge. "You could have done, but you didn't, did you? No. You wrote an article for the newspaper instead."

A man of his word

OBITUARY
Stephen Spender

STEPHEN SPENDER, who has died aged 86, achieved his first celebrity as a young man, and remained for some 60 years one of the most famous names in 20th century literature. His international fame may have owed something to his impressive appearance and his appetite for travel — abroad he was probably best known as a lecturer — but it was founded on his achievements as a man of letters in the old sense, prolific in almost every literary form: novelist, playwright, essayist, political commentator, editor, translator, literary critic, memoirist, occasionally a professor, and, always in his own mind, a poet before anything else.

Spender was born in London, the son of the Liberal journalist E H Spender. He was educated at University College School and University College, Oxford. At Oxford he began a friendship with W H Auden which lasted until Auden's death in 1973. It was founded on a true appreciation of Auden's qualities, and called for a tolerance that only profound friendship and a dedication to genius could have maintained.

It was at Oxford that Spender came to know Louis MacNeice, and, through Auden, Christopher Isherwood and Edward Upward. In the thirties all felt compelled to take politics seriously, but Spender's reaction to communism and the world crisis was different from and probably better informed than those of the others. MacNeice was the coolest of them, the readiest to confess that he regretted the loss of class privilege that seemed imminent. The imaginations of Upward and Auden were strongly imbued by a private mythology; but Upward alone was to become, and remain, a committed communist.

Spender lacked MacNeice's resigned elegance, and had little taste for "Mortmere" fantasies as described by Isherwood in Lions and Shadows. His feeling for politics was surer and more genuine than theirs; his copious writings on the subject, and on the relation of artists to politics, remain the most considered and the most serious of any by the young writers of the period.


Spender . . . above all, a poet

He was briefly a member of the Communist Party and wrote on behalf of the Spanish Republican cause, but his defection from communism — described both in his autobiography World Within World (1951) and in his contribution to the celebrated mass palinode, The God That Failed (1949) — was far from frivolous or unconsidered.

When the war came, Spender joined Cyril Connolly in editing Horizon, a periodical notable more for liveliness and variety than for responsible political commitment. He then, like Henry Green, became a London fireman; this unusual extracurricular experience is described in his autobiography. Having been ridiculed by Orwell as a pink poet, he was now ridiculed by Evelyn Waugh as a fireman poet.

Before the war he had come to know Europe well; especially Weimar Germany, and Spain left a deep impression on him. In the post-war years he travelled more extensively — to India and China as well as Europe and the United States — and wrote a great many books, notably The Struggle Of The Modern (1963), Love-Hate Relations, about England and America, and a book with David Hockney about China.

More recently he had been associated with Index on Censorship, a journal devoted to the struggle for intellectual freedom. His Journals 1939-1983 — an ample selection from records even more interesting and ample — give an account of his interests, friendships and travels over these years. In the same year (1985) were published the Collected Poems and the abbreviated translation of Sophocles's Oedipus trilogy; earlier in life he had made many effective translations from Schiller, Rilke, Lorca and others.

Spender's second marriage was with the pianist Natasha Litvin; they had two children, Matthew and Lizzie. His friendships were extraordinary in number and variety. Though delightfully clubbable, and a superb companion at lunch, he was never in danger of surrendering to the temptation of idle afternoons.

He was an absolutely distinctive figure, distracted yet accurate, funny yet serious. He was for so long — and without willing it — the unofficial ambassador of English letters that to nominate a successor seems simply out of the question. To the poetry he valued above all his other achievements time will attend. His charm, civility and wit we shall remember with warm affection in our own time.

Frank Kermode

Stephen Harold Spender, writer, born February 28, 1909; died July 16, 1995

GUARDIAN WEEKLY
23 July 1995

A BIT of cosy folklore slipped into history last week when a 15-foot length of shuttering completed the fixed link between Scotland and the Isle of Skye, *writes Erlend Clouston.*

Engineers spent the following few days dumping cement on to it and the imagination of everyone who has ever hummed the Skye Boat Song.

The project, with its causeway and one and a half miles of approach roads, has taken three years to complete at an expected cost of £35 million.

However, many locals complain that the bridge spoils the view north to Raasay, and object to the level of tolls, pointing out that the £5.20 single charge for cars will be the highest in the European Union, and £4.80 more than the longer Forth Road Bridge.

But the private developers say the toll is lower than the ferry charge levied by state-owned ferry operator Caledonian MacBrayne, which will cease operating when the bridge opens in late September.

PHOTOGRAPH: MURDO MacLEOD

School cuts create bigger classes

John Carvel

MORE than a third of primary school classes will be overcrowded next term, according to a survey of school budget plans published last week, providing the first hard evidence of how cuts in education spending will hit children and teachers.

The proportion of classes with more than 30 children will increase from 28 per cent to 34 per cent as schools try to cope with more pupils and fewer teachers, said the National Governors' Council.

Simon Goodenough, the council chairman, said the Government would have to increase the schools budget by well over £1 billion in the next public spending review in November if ministers wanted to eliminate the underfunding.

"There is a very dangerous situation building up. Our capital assets and reserves are being run down to levels from which no government may be able to rebuild them.

"Meanwhile governors have had to break into other essential resources to retain teachers. They are now running out of budget areas to pillage."

The governors said: "Average class sizes in primary schools are rapidly increasing. In 1994/5, 28 per cent of classes had more than 30 children. It is estimated that in 1995/6 this figure will have risen to 34 per cent.

"In other words more than one third of all classes will exceed 30 pupils."

The teaching unions, which are threatening industrial action short of a strike, said the survey vindicated their opposition to education spending cuts. Doug McAvoy, general secretary of the National Union of Teachers, said: "There is not a single area of expenditure in schools which has escaped the knife.

"Teachers are being prevented from providing the highest quality education for all their pupils. They are working in unsafe and unhygienic conditions, with inadequate resources and far too many pupils in their classes."

Marines on rig stand-by

Michael White and Vivek Chaudhary

ROYAL MARINES were deployed in northern Scotland last month ready to recapture the Brent Spar oil rig from Greenpeace activists in "a French-style attack", the Government admitted last week.

The army minister, Nicholas Soames, said in a parliamentary answer: "Military personnel would only have become involved if the police had requested it and, in the event, no such request was forthcoming." Contingency arrangements were put in place at RAF Kinloss near Inverness. The answer to a question from Calum MacDonald, MP for the Western Isles, confirmed the claims of activists.

The furore caused by Shell's attempt to dump Brent Spar led to European-wide protests and a boycott, headed by the environmental group, Greenpeace, which at one stage had four activists occupying the oil platform. They threatened to chain themselves to the platform to prevent the company detonating explosives that would have sunk the platform 2,000 metres below sea level. A Greenpeace spokesman said: "There has been speculation about the use of troops. It only confirms what we have suspected all along."

What remains unclear was the precise nature of the force, which Mr MacDonald likened to the "disproportionate tactics" deployed by France against Greenpeace's attempt to disrupt its Pacific nuclear test programme.

Mr Soames's reply spoke only of "a Royal Marine detachment and supporting elements". Mr MacDonald said talk of a "French-style attack" showed how much ministers were out of touch with public opinion. "Thank goodness Shell changed its mind because the Government was on a very worrying collision course with a peaceful civilian demonstration."

Charities face £41m drop

CHARITABLE donations have dropped by 14 per cent because of the National Lottery, according to research published by the National Council for Voluntary Organisations. The council urged the Government to monitor the impact on charities, after forecasting a £41 million loss in proceeds in the lottery's first year, *writes Andrew Culf.*

Stuart Etherington, the council's chief executive, said: "Our research shows there is still confusion about buying a lottery ticket and giving to charity." Of those surveyed, 56 per cent thought buying a lottery ticket was a good way to help charities.

In another report, the Joseph Rowntree Trust recommended establishing a Home Office gambling research unit to monitor groups at risk from addiction.

The Week in Britain James Lewis

Uneasy peace in Ulster holds despite unrest

PRESSURE is mounting on the British government to end the stalemate in the Northern Ireland peace process and not to insist on disarmament as a precondition to talks involving Sinn Fein, the political wing of the IRA.

Fragile though it is, the 10-month-old Ulster peace survived its severest test last week when police arranged a compromise which quelled a violent confrontation between Catholics and Orange Order marchers in Portadown, County Armagh.

There is abundant evidence that most people in the province cherish the peace, and the violence served as a reminder of what could happen if progress is not now made towards constitutional negotiations. The strain which the impasse is putting on Irish politics provoked an intervention by the Dublin Prime Minister, John Bruton, who called for urgent all-party talks on Northern Ireland's future.

His predecessor, Albert Reynolds, who was one of the architects of the ceasefire, said the warring factions had been solemnly promised the right to participate in talks in return for renouncing violence. There had, at the outset, been no question of making talks conditional on the decommissioning of terrorist weapons.

Peter Temple-Morris, the Tory MP who is co-chairman of the British-Irish inter-parliamentary body, pointed to the tension building up in Dublin and Northern Ireland and said it was up to the Prime Minister, to break the impasse. There should be a "visible timetable" for talks, which should not hinge on the decommissioning issue, he said.

A "dirty protest" was started by two IRA inmates at Whitemoor prison in Cambridgeshire, where tighter security regimes were imposed after the escape of five IRA inmates last year. The tactic, which involves spreading excrement on cell walls and wearing only blankets, is also a protest against the Government's refusal to transfer them to Northern Ireland prisons. The Northern Ireland secretary, Sir Patrick Mayhew, is in favour of moving IRA prisoners closer to their families, but the decision rests with the Home Secretary, Michael Howard, who disagrees.

The Royal Ulster Constabulary was planning to slim down its inflated force of 13,500 officers as a consequence of the ceasefire. Following the recent unrest, however, the cuts have been put on hold, and officers told their jobs are safe "for the foreseeable future".

THE RAIL network ground to a standstill again this week as engine drivers staged their second one-day stoppage in pursuit of their demand for an improvement on a pay offer of 3 per cent. The stoppages — the next is on July 27 — will continue through August unless British Rail backs down.

One of the few trains running on strike days will be the Eurostar service from London through the Channel Tunnel to Paris and Brussels. The long promised high-speed link between London and the tunnel at Folkestone, however, is as far away as ever. The Government insists that it must be built by the private sector, but the two interested consortiums announced last week that they would need a subsidy of at least £2 billion towards the £2.8 billion project.

The August bank holiday (on August 28) also promises to be a miserable day for travellers if, as expected, the 20,000 workers of British Airways vote for strike action. They are protesting against BA's decision to scrap national pay bargaining and to deal instead with local groups of workers.

The move from national to local pay bargaining could also mean sustained industrial action by 600,000 health workers — hospital support staff, ambulance crews and possibly some nurses — beginning with a one-day strike in September. If they vote to take action, they could cause the most widespread disruption in the service for 13 years.

THE LABOUR leader, Tony Blair, raised some eyebrows at home when he flew to Queensland and claimed that only "new" Labour could complete the social and economical revolution begun by Margaret Thatcher in the 1980s. He was addressing managers of Rupert Murdoch's media empire, who in the UK have been consistently hostile to Lady Thatcher's successor, John Major.

Mr Blair insisted that he had not flown to Australia to "flirt" with anyone but to explain Labour's policies to an important media audience. Beyond setting out his party's radical, anti-Establishment stance, he made no discernible concessions to the Murdoch world view. Neither, apparently, did he say what a Labour government would do about monopolistic media tycoons.

THE HOUSE of Lords opened the way for people wrongly accused of crimes — including men falsely accused of rape — to sue their accusers for damages in the civil courts.

In the first such case to be brought in Britain, five law lords ruled unanimously that an individual whose false accusation causes police to prosecute can be sued for malicious prosecution even though it is, technically, the police who do the prosecuting. Previously, such cases have been brought only against police forces for prosecuting when they knew a defendant was innocent

One of the judges, Lord Keith, said: "To deny any remedy to a person whose liberty has been interfered with as a result of unfounded and malicious accusations . . . would constitute a serious denial of justice."

NATIONAL Lottery winner Terry Benson found that Lady Luck had abandoned him as quickly as she had smiled upon him. While the 60-year-old and his family were posing for the media to celebrate their £20 million jackpot, thieves were breaking into their home in Hull and helping themselves to the family jewels. "This has certainly knocked the gilt off the gingerbread," commented Mrs Benson.

Europe rebuffed as army gets US helicopters in £2.5bn deal

Chris Barrie and Mark Milner

THE Government has dealt a heavy blow to European collaboration on defence projects by rebuffing French and German pressure to invest in the European industry and opting instead to spend £2.5 billion on American attack helicopters.

The decision, the first to be taken by Michael Portillo, the new Defence Secretary, marks the end of a fiercely competitive bidding process for what will be one of the largest contracts to be awarded by the Ministry of Defence over the next 10 years.

The victory for Westland helicopters of Yeovil, Dorset, will underpin 3,000 jobs in the defence industry. Westland, a subsidiary of the engineering group GKN, will assemble the 67 Apache helicopters, which were developed by McDonnell Douglas of the United States. Rolls-Royce will supply the engines.

The MoD also announced last week that it would spend £180 million on US cruise missiles for submarines. Neither the missiles nor helicopters have nuclear capability.

Under the terms of the deal 180 British firms will work on the contract, including Shorts of Belfast which will make the Apache's Hellfire anti-armour missile. The Trade and Industry Department said that 50 per cent of the work on the helicopters would be carried out in Britain.

It added that US defence contractors had pledged to provide extra work to British firms to offset the value of the overseas work on the Apaches.

The losers are British Aerospace, which had advocated participation in a Franco-German project to develop the Tiger helicopter, and GEC, which had offered an updated version of the Cobra Venom helicopter first used in the Vietnam war.

President Jacques Chirac deplored the decision, accusing Britain of missing an opportunity to develop a strong European defence.

Mr Portillo said that the army had wanted the Apache helicopter, which has superior firepower.

Apache

Britain ordered 67 Apache attack helicopters to be made by the US company McDonnell Douglas and Britain's GKN Westland in a £2.5bn deal.



- Max range: **1,180 miles**
- Max speed: **162 mph**
- Anti-tank missiles: **16**
- Air to air missiles: 4

GRAPHIC: REUTERS/GUARDIAN

Top pay report sparks row

Lisa Buckingham, Simon Beavis and Michael White

THE long awaited Greenbury report on top executive pay ran into immediate controversy on Monday as it was used to justify packages already condemned as corporate greed.

British Gas, whose 75 per cent pay rise for chief executive Cedric Brown gave impetus to establishing the Greenbury committee, said it now regarded itself as "at the leading edge of best practice".

Other privatised utilities, whose share options for directors aroused public fury, said they would review pay policy but stressed their remuneration committees already complied with the recommendations.

And although Chancellor Kenneth Clarke reacted swiftly to implement a key Greenbury recommendation — taxing share option profits as income rather than capital gains — tax experts warned this would hit employee shareholders rather than boardroom "fat cats".

While welcoming the Greenbury committee's move towards greater disclosure of pay packages, one-year contracts and the opening-up of remuneration committees, Labour charged it with timidity by failing to tackle the central problem — "the unacceptable abuses" in privatised utilities that had been heavily subsidised at birth and not exposed to real competition.

Sir Richard Greenbury, chairman of Marks & Spencer, whose committee was set up by the CBI at the Government's behest, insisted his report would go a long way towards stamping out boardroom excess. The committee called on privatised gas, water and electricity companies to review pay policies and make "voluntary" changes where appropriate.

But Alan MacDougall, of Pensions Investment Research Consultants, the corporate governance lobby group, said: "I can't see the utility bosses handing back their millions."

Will Hutton, page 21

Main points

- **Stock Exchange to force listed companies to make full disclosure and annual statement to shareholders on compliance with Greenbury code.**
- **Remuneration committees to consist exclusively of non-executives. No potential conflicts of interests to arise from cross-directorships and day-to-day involvement in the business.**
- **Privatised water and energy companies to review existing remuneration packages, including share options, and adjust them voluntarily as necessary.**
- **In future privatisations, no share options to be granted for at least six months.**
- **Discounted share options to be banned.**
- **All long-term incentive schemes and share-option plans to be approved by shareholders.**
- **Annual report to include more detail on pay, pensions and perks.**

Major's tax cut pledge leaves Tories troubled

THE Prime Minister last week placed his parliamentary troops on 94 weeks' notice to reverse Tory fortunes and win the next general election — only to find himself in fresh trouble over tax plans which Labour said amounted to the modern equivalent of the Biblical "feeding of the 5,000", *write Michael White and Richard Thomas.*

John Major's message was clouded by a running battle over his own pledges, during the leadership contest and afterwards, to move towards abolition of inheritance and capital gains taxes — policies that he told Labour leader Tony Blair at Question Time would benefit millions thanks to the "trickle-down" effect, but which Labour says will really serve only the most wealthy.

But the Chancellor, Kenneth Clarke, has given a lukewarm response to the idea since, experts conceded, only 120,000 voters would directly gain from the abolition of both taxes — compared with the 18 million individuals who would benefit directly from a 1.5p cut in the basic rate of income tax.

In Brief

THREE British soldiers accused of conspiring to rape a Danish tour guide and beating her to death with a shovel have gone on trial in Cyprus.

A MAN jailed 16 years ago for the murder of a 14-year-old boy has been cleared by the Court of Appeal. George Long, aged 37, was freed after the court decided his conviction was unsafe.

THE three Metropolitan police officers acquitted on charges of unlawfully killing the deportee Joy Gardner will not face disciplinary charges, the Police Complaints Authority has confirmed.

THE Lord Chief Justice, Lord Taylor, has dismissed Public Interest Immunity certificates — "gagging orders" — signed by Home Secretary Michael Howard and former Foreign Secretary Douglas Hurd and ordered Whitehall to hand over documents to lawyers acting for four directors of a military engineering firm, Ordtec, who are appealing against their conviction for selling weapons to Iraq via Jordan.

A NEW discovery could lead to millions of lives being saved with new malaria treatments. Researchers in Britain and the US have identified genes in the malaria parasite that enable it to manipulate blood cells — both making them sticky and stopping antibodies destroying them.

POP STAR George Michael has signed a contract with Virgin Records after settling the long-running dispute which saw him fight and lose a court case to be released by his former record company, Sony.

SIR PETER Morrison, a former parliamentary private secretary to Lady Thatcher and one of her advisers when she was forced out of Downing Street in 1990, has died of a heart attack at the age of 51.

AN ALBUM of 19th century Filipino watercolours has become the most expensive discovery by the BBC TV's Antiques Roadshow when it sold at Christie's in London for £265,500.

A TEENAGER who fired a starting pistol outside the Prime Minister's constituency home last month has been fined £250. Robert Gipters, aged 19, pleaded guilty to threatening behaviour.

A FORMER council worker who became ill after being exposed to colleagues' cigarette smoke has been awarded £25,000 damages. Beryl Roe, aged 59, blamed Stockport council for failing to ventilate her office.

Man accused of war crimes

Alan Travis

THE FIRST British citizen to be accused under the 1991 War Crimes Act was charged last week with four counts of murdering unnamed Jews in Nazi-occupied Byelorussia.

Szymon Serafinowicz, aged 84, from Banstead, Surrey, was granted bail after the 30-minute hearing at Epsom magistrates court. He was remanded until a second hearing on October 5.

Serafinowicz, the first person to be charged under the act, is alleged to have commanded a local police force during the second world war. The charges relate to the murders of Jewish civilians in 1941 and 1942.

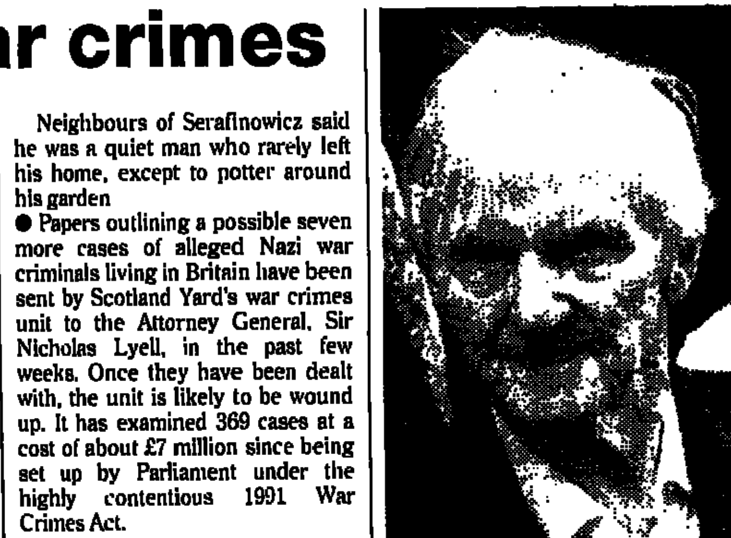
After the hearing his solicitor, Nicholas Bowers, insisted his client was innocent and would mount a full defence financed by legal aid. "Our client entered this country in 1947 and has subsequently been granted British citizenship. He has been an honest and hard working member of society."

Serafinowicz, a builder and carpenter, had been aware of the police investigation for more than two years. He had been under considerable stress. "He is now determined to have these matters brought to trial so that he will have the opportunity to clear his name," said Mr Bowers.

Neighbours of Serafinowicz said he was a quiet man who rarely left his home, except to potter around his garden

- Papers outlining a possible seven more cases of alleged Nazi war criminals living in Britain have been sent by Scotland Yard's war crimes unit to the Attorney General, Sir Nicholas Lyell, in the past few weeks. Once they have been dealt with, the unit is likely to be wound up. It has examined 369 cases at a cost of about £7 million since being set up by Parliament under the highly contentious 1991 War Crimes Act.

Comment, page 12



Accused: Szymon Serafinowicz

Defending the defensible

BOSNIA: WHAT to do now? First, reassert the commitment while recognising the difficulties. Second, find some way, limited and achievable, to signal that the United Nations intends to stay in business. Third, stop talking about endgames: just because we have come a long way does not mean we have reached the conclusion.

Amid last week's agonisings there was a notable failure on anyone's part to call for immediate withdrawal from Bosnia — with the powerful, irresponsible exception of the Bob Dole tendency. Some of the external participants may wish to be rid of the obligation but even they admit withdrawal is not "at present" on the cards. Chiefs of staff may jib too at the thought of what in military terms could become a UN Dienbienphu. The real question now is whether to let events take their course, noisily and bloodily, until withdrawal becomes the only path left open, or to keep looking for a course of action which may buy more time for negotiations. The temptation is to drift: the need is still for commitment.

Can the "safe areas" be saved? It is now a commonplace, repeated last week by the British Foreign Secretary, Malcolm Rifkind, that the troops required to defend adequately the safe areas and authorised by the Security Council were never actually dispatched to Bosnia. We must accept that it is too late to regain Srebrenica: it is sheer fantasy to imagine that a UN expeditionary force could be dispatched over a hundred mountainous miles or that it would not become bogged down if it reached its destination. The problem of defending supply routes for itself and for the refugees across Serb-controlled territory would be insuperable. It has to be recognised too that the much smaller enclave of Zepa is beyond protection. In brutal military terms nothing can be done anywhere for several weeks. But the extra troops are finally there or on the way. Serious thought should now be given to the possibility of moving to ring-fence the larger enclaves of Bihac, Gorazde and Tuzla. With a combined population of nearly half a million these are much more than dots on the map. Sarajevo, however miserable the plight of its citizens, is "safe" from being overrun: even the Bosnian Serbs realise that this would be only achievable by reducing the city to rubble.

Mr Rifkind was right to note that the original UN decision on setting up the safe areas also required them to be demilitarised. Again for lack of troops this was never achieved and there is some truth in Bosnian Serb claims that these areas have been used as launching pads for government raids or — most notoriously in the case of Bihac — actual offensives. The Bosnian Serb response in Srebrenica is both disproportionate and inhumane, but if safe areas are to be made safe then they must be demilitarised too.

French demands for the recapture of Srebrenica ring hollow except to a domestic audience. Accompanying hints that France may pull out of Bosnia unless Srebrenica is retaken betray a fundamental cynicism which Britain has managed to avoid. Opposition calls for "ultimatums" to the Bosnian Serbs are equally unconvincing unless the consequences are carefully thought through. Experience so far should rule out air strikes altogether as a means of enforcement.

If there were easy solutions in Bosnia there would be no crisis now. If more had been done before, there would be more options now. But we have to operate in the real world. The UN has to decide what is defensible and then seek to defend it, without rhetoric or bluster.

Justice without a time limit

WERE the Lords right? Five years ago the House of Lords rejected the War Crimes Bill by a huge majority — 207 to 74 — on the grounds that justice in such prosecutions would be impossible. Peers pointed to the 50-year gap between the war crimes and possible prosecution, the deterioration in memory, the age of the accused, the age and frailty of witnesses many of whom would not be able to travel and would have to give their evidence on video. Peers who voted against the Bill in 1990 will have had their doubts confirmed last week by the pictures of Szymon Serafinowicz, an 84-year-old former Byelorussian who later took British citizenship, walking unsteadily out of Epsom magistrates court accused of war crimes.

Serafinowicz is the first defendant to be charged under the 1991 War Crimes Act. He will enjoy all the rights of the rule of law. Legal aid will ensure his lawyers will be able to provide "a full and vigorous defence". He remains a defendant, not an offender. It will be up to a jury to decide whether he is guilty of the four murder counts for which he stands charged. Even his trial is several months away. All that can be said at present is that the charges will not have been lightly made. A four-year investigation has been conducted by Scotland Yard into the records of suspected war criminals living in Britain. The team included police, historians, and civil support staff. Their evidence will have been examined by the Director of Public Prosecutions and the decision to prosecute, under the terms of the 1991 Act, required the personal approval of the Attorney General who has to be satisfied that it is in the public interest and that there is sufficient evidence.

What can be said — before any of the peers reopen their objections — is that the Commons was right to overrule the Lords' vote and enact the 1991 legislation. Far from the Nuremberg trials having drawn a line in 1948, the lawyers involved recognised that there was much unfinished business, as subsequent prosecutions in America, Australia and France have demonstrated. There has never been a statute of limitation (time limit) on murder prosecutions in the UK. It would have been odd to allow one for mass murderers. The 1991 Act followed a report from Sir Thomas Hetherington, the most experienced English prosecutor of his time, who with his Scottish equivalent concluded: "The crimes committed are so monstrous that they cannot be condoned . . . to take no action would taint the UK with the slur of being a haven for war criminals."

Good deeds for wrong reasons

BILL CLINTON'S decision to "normalise" relations with Vietnam is entirely sensible and long overdue. Diplomatic ties between countries should be as natural as trade or postal communications: there has to be a very exceptional reason for them not to be made. But this is an exceptional subject where the echoes of history — some tragic and others mocking — continue to resound 20 years after Saigon fell. There were tears at last week's hearing in Washington where one congressman, a former Navy pilot, accused Vietnam of hiding the remains of US servicemen in a secret warehouse. There were cheers at the expatriates' pub in Hanoi where a small group from the US business community toasted the president's decision which will help them compete on equal terms with Japanese and Korean firms. The balance in US opinion between war-gut hostility and economic interest has meant diplomatic deadlock till now. So what has tipped the balance?

The administration says that the answer is simple and that Hanoi has now fulfilled all the conditions in the "road map" given to it by the Bush administration for normalising relations. But even on the rigorous terms laid down unilaterally by Washington this has been true for some time. Some US policy-makers, and many more analysts, point to worsening relations with China as the really critical factor. Washington, they say, now seeks stronger ties to Vietnam as a counter-weight to Beijing's growing regional power. The modernisation of China's navy and its assertive claims on the islands of the South China Sea are said to cause particular alarm. Tolerance for Chinese pretensions suited the US well in the 1980s when Beijing's anti-Soviet posture chimed with cold war strategy. Now it is China's turn for the treatment.

The main reason offered till quite recently for the US refusing to normalise relations with Hanoi was that this would "annoy Beijing". History, it might conclude, is a funny old thing.

A good decision has been taken even if for the wrong reasons and Vietnam is no longer to be punished for its temerity 20 years ago in defeating the world's first superpower. Welcoming the decision in Hanoi, Prime Minister Vo Van Kiet quietly observed that while the US is concerned about its more than 1,600 soldiers listed as missing-in-action, some 300,000 Vietnamese soldiers are still not accounted for. But that is another perspective and another story.

Look here, just pack it in and die quietly

Maggie O'Kane

DEAR Srebrenica, sorry for your trouble. I'm just writing to say, as I told the Commons last week, that the best thing you "safe haven" Muslims could do is to surrender your weapons and demilitarise.

I know this is a pretty odd suggestion, but when you're the British Foreign Secretary, speaking about Bosnia, it's a question of muddling through the sticky bits: the fall of the first safe haven, market-place massacres, bloody playgrounds, little Irmas, that sort of thing; and pointing out again and again, as I did in the Commons, that we've sent lots of troops, who may be going out of their minds with boredom doing nothing — but at least we sent them.

Incidentally, the Serbs were wondering if we at the UN could help them out with a spot of ethnic cleansing — given that there's 40,000 of you still hanging about inside the Srebrenica enclave. They've asked us to help out with a road for you so you can clear out to Tuzla in central Bosnia. A nice big safe haven reservation we've set up. The Serbs have even offered to lay on the buses to take you to the refugee camps. We're organising that.

I know all this is a bit hard to take, given that the Serb soldiers who have overrun you are right now in the UN compound at Potocari selecting men and boys of fighting age whom they will take away and we hear you are all in very, very poor shape. But . . . on a positive note, our new negotiator has arrived from Sweden to replace David Owen, who worked with Stoltenberg, who took over from Vance, who came in after Carrington, who started the toothless diplomatic efforts a French diplomat once described as "a carcass of dead policies".

A few other housekeeping details: we understand there is a street in Srebrenica named after General Philippe Morillon. You remember, he was the French commander of the UN forces in Bosnia who climbed on top of a white UN tank in your town in March 1993 and told the 60,000 of you gathered in rags huddled around street fires: "I will leave the region only when I am sure that the population is no longer in danger."

On the subject of generals — don't pay to much attention to our new chap Rupert Smith. He's a bit "overkeen". He seems to think one of the reasons he's in Sarajevo is to carry out the UN mandate and use all necessary means to get humanitarian aid through to the city. He's muttering on about opening that mountain road on Mount Igman, so people won't have to spend their fourth freezing winter in Sarajevo. I've already said we're having none of that and we're just ignoring him for the moment, but if he persists I may need to have a few words with him.

One more thing to get straight. Your chaps will have to stop trying to fight back. We know all about last month's foolish attempts to lift the siege of Sarajevo. We understand that a lot of your Bosnian army soldiers have lost their families and come from those awful camps that the Serbs set up in August 1992, but the idea must be pretty clear by now. You are supposed to sit and rot for another summer in your fetid, overcrowded safe havens, waiting for winter, watching your children in the playgrounds and listening for the shells. "Shooting the beef," as General Mladic calls shelling civilians. Speaking of another kind of beef, the Rapid Reaction Force has started work. That's 10,000 new soldiers armed with the latest and the best. We had to send them in after the Serbs started tying our boys to lamp-posts. Or as M Chirac pointed out on June 2: "France will no longer tolerate that her soldiers are humiliated, wounded or killed with impunity."

Or, to put it another way, the Bosnian Serbs can kill as many of you lot as they like, in playgrounds and bread queues, but don't go embarrassing us by tying our soldiers to bridges and then putting them on television.

I know you must be feeling pretty annoyed with us but the bottom line is this: we never had a strategy. Our response in Bosnia has been determined by that great strategist of statecraft, Machiavelli, who said, quite rightly, that it does not matter what you do as long as it looks like you are doing something.

SO WE'VE been pumping in soldiers, who don't know why they are there, to escort food that is not allowed through; to fly planes that the Serbs forbid to fly; to create safe havens like yours which they cannot protect because, in Britain, people like John Major, Douglas Hurd and myself were never prepared to put ourselves on the line and risk a domestic backlash by declaring in a clear and honourable voice in Europe what is plain to anyone, certainly to anyone as smart as me, that it takes force to stop the Serbs.

And — this is the sticky bit we could never admit — to declare that Bosnia is worth fighting for. Because this isn't an ancient ethnic war but the jackboot of modern militarised racism in Europe. The very jackboot that the United Nations was set up to protect us against and something that Nato, now with the most powerful army in the world, has the power to fight.

So, all that said and done, why don't you lot from Srebrenica pick up your little bundles, like the other 250,000 who have gone before you, and clear off.

Yours sincerely
Malcolm Rifkind



Le Monde

French nuclear issue clouds German view

Lucas Delattre in Bonn

RARELY has France been the subject of so much attention in Germany. Unfortunately, it is in less than kind terms that it is making the news here. The day before the July 11 Franco-German summit in Strasbourg, President Jacques Chirac's picture was in all the weeklies, but mostly against a backdrop of the Hiroshima atomic bomb explosion and the victims of that blast.

The news that France planned to resume nuclear tests has outraged German public opinion, which reacts violently on the question of the bomb, with its devastating consequences for the environment. In a way, using the atom for military purposes is seen here as a great perversion — the final insult to the future of mankind. This is one of the fundamental issues on which there is a consensus in the modern Federal Republic.

Bonn is not ruling out the possibility that "widespread anti-French sentiments" might be expressed throughout the country when the tests start in September. With the public leaning hard on them, German leaders are in an extremely awkward position with regard to Paris, for they are well aware that the issue could quickly spill over from the context of nuclear tests to other areas. "If Chirac cuts the number of tests to three or four, that would obviously be a very good thing," said a Bonn spokesman.

On July 10 Chancellor Helmut Kohl felt he had to issue a statement saying he would raise the matter privately at his Strasbourg meeting with Chirac the following day. The confused blend of anti-militarist and anti-French pressures is such that some German officials say they are "relieved" that no agreement has yet been reached with Paris on Germany's share in financing the programme to construct the observation satellites Hélios II and Horus.

The official view in Bonn is that the German government is going to be answerable to parliament every time a French nuclear test takes place in Mururoa, beginning in the autumn. In the Bundestag recently a Free Democratic Party deputy put France in the same boat as China. Christian Democratic Union (CDU) deputies indignantly recalled that the French Hadès missiles (now dismantled) were targeted on Germany not so long ago.

So it appears that, two months after Chirac's election, a "new era of suspicion" between the two countries may be developing. What makes the nuclear tests so important is that their political implications far outweigh their military value.

"I wouldn't be surprised if the Germans became less enthusiastic about European political union if France continued to assert the exclusive character of its national sovereignty," said Günther Nonnenmacher of the Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung. "This is particularly true where nuclear tests are concerned, but it is also true where French reluctance to apply the Schengen convention [to lift border controls] is concerned."

Another argument is quietly beginning to gain ground in official government circles. "If the French consider the bomb is their business, couldn't the Germans argue that the Deutschmark is, after all, equally exclusively a matter of German national sovereignty?" Some German quarters even appear to be secretly hoping that France might not be able to fulfil the Maastricht treaty's convergence criteria on time.

A recent Dresdner Bank analysis, published after France adopted its supplementary finance bill for 1995, drew attention to the scepticism in the German financial community.

But what is worrying the Germans most is the French determination to bring in, right from the start, countries with weak currencies, such as Spain and Italy, into the single currency system — indicating in this way its intention of counterbalancing the power of the Deutschmark.



Chirac delivers his speech against a background of anti-test posters at the European Parliament in Strasbourg PHOTOGRAPH: ERIC CABANIS

Hence the Bundesbank's repeated attempts to reinforce the budgetary discipline mechanisms applying to future countries joining the European economic and monetary union. France is, as of now, refusing to extend the Maastricht criteria by adding what one French diplomat calls the "Tietmeyer criteria" (after Hans Tietmeyer, president of the Bundesbank).

Seen from Germany, French leaders do not appear to be ready to buttress the monetary union with a political union that Bonn regards as its indispensable corollary. Bonn fears that the current Anglo-French "flirtation" could help to weaken Europe politically.

The return of Gaullism to government in France is far from welcome. Described as a "boor" in mass-circulation newspapers, and perceived in government circles as "an inveterate representative of the French state model", Chirac still has not found the words to soothe an angry Germany. On an official level, though, nothing has changed. Kohl speaks of his "friend" Jacques Chirac and keeps up the appearance of continuity.

In fact, German officials are currently at a stage where they are taking stock of the situation and remaining on their guard, according to a French diplomat. Until they find out his real intentions, Bonn's leaders have decided to give Chirac plenty of credit.

"France today is a big question mark for the Germans," said one observer.

While Kohl and his aides express firm confidence in the future of relations with Paris, other, more sceptical voices are being heard nearly everywhere. Is France becoming marginalised in Europe?

(July 12)

Algerian hardliners call the tune

The murder of an imam in Paris is raising fears of Algeria's conflict spilling over into France, writes **Catherine Simon**

COULD the "second Algerian war", as some are too hastily calling it, spread to France in the same way as happened in the 1950s? Such a fearful prospect suggests itself all too easily following the death on July 11 of Imam Abdelbaki Sahraoui, co-founder of Algeria's now banned Islamic Salvation Front (FIS), who was shot dead inside his Rue Myrha mosque in Paris's 18th *arrondissement*.

Some analysts go further and say the killing is probably the work of a hit squad sent by the Armed Islamic Group (GIA), which has been fighting both the Algerian government and the FIS. Whoever is responsible, this is the first assassination in France of a prominent Algerian figure since Algiers declared a state of emergency in 1992.

The suggested scenario is not that far-fetched. Implacably opposed to any deal with the Algerian government, usually referred to as the *taghout* (tyrant), hardliners in the Islamist fundamentalist movement do not take kindly — to put it mildly — to the secret moves being made to establish a "dialogue" between FIS leaders Abassi Madani, Ali Benhadj and Abdelkader Hachani, on the one hand, and the Algiers military government on the other.

According to this view, Sahraoui's assassination should be seen as a warning shot across the bows of the FIS that is designed to intimidate its political leaders, who are regarded as traitors to the cause. Attractive though this reading is, it nevertheless oversimplifies the situation. The "military" elements in the Islamist ranks are not alone in wanting the war to continue. Powerful advocates of "security" are to be found in the government, particularly in the army, and its civilian administrative and party extensions.

Members of this minority of rabble-rousers, opposed to any compromise with the Islamists and to any real dialogue with the democratic opposition, want above all to preserve their advantages and political leverage.

For waging their campaign in Algeria and abroad, they enjoy considerable diplomatic and media clout, as was seen when the Algerian opposition parties met in Rome in November 1994 and January 1995. But the tight security clampdown also confers less well known benefits. What the Algerians call the military security service (SM) is only one of many branches, and at a time of severe crisis they are active in all sorts of ways.

The splits and rivalries bedevilling the ranks of the Islamist movement are not new. They cannot be reduced to an assumed squaring off between the GIA and the armed wing of the FIS, the Islamic Salvation Army (AIS). Well-informed sources say that the GIA has split into several "small GIAs", generally all opposed to one another. This tendency to fragment uncontrollably appeared to become more pronounced following the death of a GIA "emir", Sid Ahmed Mourad aka Djaafer El Afghani, who was killed in February last year.

In an oddly symmetrical way, much the same process has taken place on the government side, with the co-ordination between the different "secret services" — if it ever existed — breaking down over time. Every clan in the government depends on its own militias and its own intermediaries in the "services". Highly skilled in the art of manipulation, the latter not only put pressure on the Algerian media, but are also apparently capable of making threats and carrying out attacks that are then blamed on Islamist "terrorists".

Given the circumstances, it will probably be difficult to know — for a long time to come — who ordered Sahraoui's execution.

(July 13)

Time to forge a new nation of Islam

EDITORIAL

THE day after Imam Abdelbaki Sahraoui was assassinated in his prayer room in Paris, Muslims demanded that mosques be as well guarded as synagogues. It reflects the fears that have arisen in the Muslim community — fear of a politicisation of their places of worship, fear of a growing tendency to inform on one another, and fear of more discredit falling on a community which, although it has its Islamist sympathisers, is for the most part moderate and anxious to become integrated.

The Quai d'Orsay and the interior ministry have been expecting the Algerians to start settling their scores in France for a long time, and have promised to do everything possible to shed light on the murder. The Muslim community's leaders have reacted by calling on their people to remain calm. But once again, it is political events outside France that are highlighting the difficulties of the 4 million-strong community which has so often been the target of repressive policies.

The difficulties have long since been identified — fragmentation on ethnic lines, absence of proper representation, guidance provided by untrained imams, and financial pressures from Arab countries that bankroll the community.

Compounding all this is pressure from a militant fundamentalism — coming from foreign support networks of Islamist movements that have infiltrated into the country and local pressure as a result of the problems in the suburbs, the bankruptcy of integration policies, the mistakes of the educational system, and the general sense of being excluded.

While the Islamism that uses France as a "sanctuary" cannot be confused with simple assertions of identity by young North Africans who, let down by secular anti-racist movements, seek refuge in Islam, their methods are sometimes the same — working on social problems, and gaining control of educational aid networks and places of worship.

The assassination in the heart of Paris of an Algerian imam can only strengthen the hands of those who urge a repressive policy based on maintaining strict border controls and smashing Islamist networks.

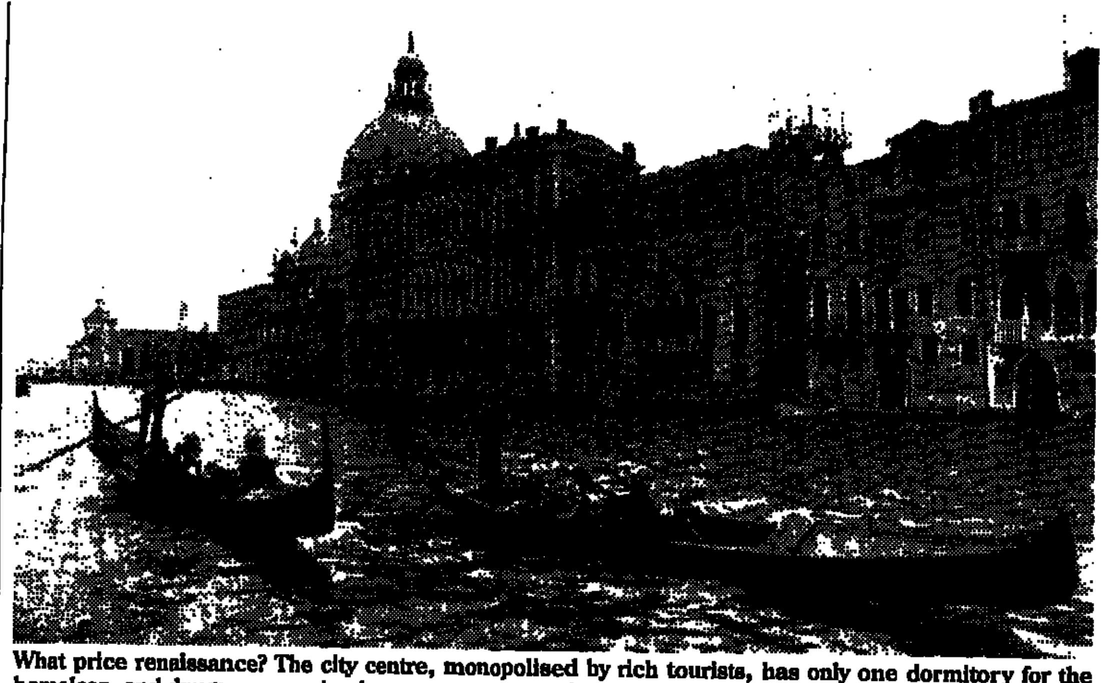
But this is not enough. The government has an obligation to help the Muslim community shake off the hold that foreign countries have on it and — despite the official secular straitjacket — help towards the emergence of an "Islam of France", with proper places of worship that are easy to keep under check and have trained officials. However, the divisions among Muslim leaders can only encourage the supporters of a do-nothing policy that will be suicidal in the short term.

(July 14)

GUARDIAN WEEKLY
July 23 1995

Venice strives to rise above a sea of clichés

The mayor is struggling to stop the city becoming a cultural Disneyland, write **Marie-Claude Decamps** and **Emmanuel de Roux**



What price renaissance? The city centre, monopolised by rich tourists, has only one dormitory for the homeless, and drugs are causing havoc, even among the gondoliers PHOTOGRAPH: RAY ROBERTS

THERE is nothing spectacular about the mechanical diggers dredging a 50-metre stretch of canal, but large numbers of Venetians have been flocking to watch the age-old operation, a tradition that even the Napoleonic invader respected.

And it is here in the foul-smelling mud, accumulated during 40 years of administrative negligence, that Venice has probably deposited its latest myth — that of a renaissance through the efforts of its mayor, the philosopher Massimo Cacciari.

A new myth? Surely everything that can be said has been said about Venice. Its largely literary legend, which crams 6 million tourists into the city every year, is transforming the place Marcel Proust regarded as the "shrine of religion and beauty" into a drab and dreary flea market.

If a more ecological and despairing version is needed, there is no shortage of doomsayings about the fragile ecosystem of a city corroded by pollution and the inexorably rising waters of its lagoon. A mass of clichés conclude with the same invocation: Venice must be saved.

With this in mind, countless committees have been formed, some even becoming professions. Millions have been wasted on harebrained schemes such as waterproofing the Piazza San Marco, or the ambitious construction of a mobile sea wall for opening and closing the lagoon entrances.

All has been swallowed up in the waters that seem to be Venice's ultimate fate. So is there any justification for the flurry of hope raised by the election of this mayor a year and a half ago without the backing of the mainstream parties? Couldn't this academic be just an illusion in a city "where lions fly and pigeons walk"? Would he not simply philosophise about the "necessity of angels", as he has said in one of his philosophical essays? "Let's have done with myths and all this morbid talk about Venice dying. Do I have to say it again? Thomas Mann doesn't live here any more."

In his office near the Rialto, Cacciari gives himself a 30-minute break from a clutter of files. Anger is suppressed behind his waxen pallor and luxuriant beard: people have been trying to "save" Venice for the past 50 years, he says, and the whole thing will have to be done again.

Administratively, the community consists of 290,000 residents, 200,000 of whom live on the "mainland" in the industrial boroughs of Mestre and Marghera, 20,000 on the small islands, and the remaining 70,000 in the "historic centre". Forty years ago, this core numbered 170,000. At this rate, within a generation Venice will be a empty shell of luxury haunted by holidaymakers dreaming of bygone splendours.

The line is narrow between the temptation to preserve Venice as it is, as a museum of itself — often the more or less conscious choice of foreigners — and the twenties dream of renovating it completely. "Enough of hand-to-mouth projects," says Cacciari. "We have decided on a thorough review of general structures."

He has taken out a double-page spread in the local newspaper, Gazzettino, to tell his constituents about the 37 projects started since he took office. "Each has its own financing. I wouldn't have wanted to hear of it otherwise." They range from dredging the canals in the city's historic centre to extending Marco Polo airport.

Central schemes include reorganising the city's "ancient" and "modern" museums, such as the recently renovated Padiglione Italiano dei Giardini, which will become a museum of contemporary art, the opening of a science and technology park in Marghera, and turning the former mills on Giudecca island into a convention centre.

Perhaps the most intellectual of Venetian mayors, Cacciari is the man to renovate the city. A bachelor, well past 50, he still lives with his mother and a library of 15,000 books. A solitary man, he has above all the advantage of being a Venetian, son of a well-known city paediatrician. After serving two terms as a Communist Party deputy in the late 1970s, he moved away from the party when in 1990 it re-emerged as the Democratic Party of the Left (PDS). The Socialist Party made overtures to him, but he brushed them off with a cruel quip that is now famous: "Become a Socialist? No thank you, I'm already rich through my family."

Everybody in Venice knows this mayor who draws his strength from the city's shared roots — the writings of art historian Marcello Taffari and Giuseppi Mazzariol, the man who unsuccessfully pleaded with architects like Le Corbusier and Louis Kahn to come and build on the lagoon. Paolo Costa, rector of Foscari University, recalls: "In the 1960s we were a small group around Mazzariol, who was considering the city's problems. Massimo was a short-tempered young man who sometimes threw tantrums. He was almost always paradoxical, but frequently right."

So in 1993 when this former undisciplined leftist hothead ran for mayor backed by a coalition of the PDS, the Communist Refoundation (Rifondazione Comunista), Greens and a few independents, he was an easy winner.

Cacciari still rides high in opinion polls, getting more than 50 per cent. But he is "respected more than loved", says Paolo Vitti, director of the Palazzo Grassi, Fiat's prestigious cultural showcase. But Vitti also recognises that he is the "first mayor who has lived up to the city's reputation".

Opposition to Cacciari can be found, oddly enough, in the Rifondazione Comunista, the party of former communists that still hankers for the old order. Among them is Paolo Cacciari, Massimo's brother, a regional deputy who regrets that the mayor has cobbled together a team of "technocrats for giving himself an image, instead of relying on the parties that supported him.

"We all know where the roots of Venice's problems lie," he says. "What's missing is the will to address them. What's needed here is an authoritative chief magistrate, otherwise the city will be reduced to a cultural Disneyland."

Authority is something Massimo Cacciari does not lack, and he puts his job on the line whenever his plans are resisted. He works 12- to 14-hour days and spends two mornings a week listening to constituents' complaints. Yet for a man pressed for time, he never skips an appointment with the media.

"I DON'T KNOW whether he is the best of mayors," says one of his most implacable opponents, Renato Brunetta, an economist. "But he is the best of communicators. The problem is, his record after 18 months in office is zero, as insignificant as what he formerly did in the Chamber of Deputies."

"My obsession is precisely to have the means for acting," Cacciari retorts angrily, "for at last shaking off the hand of Rome and the region. Venice's problem is the same, but in more acute form, as the one facing all large Italian communes in a completely centralised system."

What about the new law on electing mayors directly?

"Pure illusion. The law lets us choose our assistants, that's all. I have 0.1 per cent more power, that's all. Local authorities can't do a thing without going through the filter of 10,000 supervisors, regulations and checks. It's this impenetrable jungle of laws that has helped to spread corruption. When you can't legitimately bring off a project, you're tempted to take short-cuts, such as misappropriating public funds."

It is not by chance that Gianfranco Mosetto, the city official responsible for culture, is primarily a specialist in cultural economy. The watchword is to reverse the present trend, rescue culture from ephemeral splurging and make it the centrepiece of a more thoughtful, and more élitist, tourism.

Meanwhile, the pernicious effect of the tourist monoculture hides the real Venice that is trying to live down its own myth.

"It's the Venice people prefer not to see, as everything here is geared for making money," says Gianni Scarpa, a social service volunteer who every evening distributes food to people at Cannaregio, where Tintoretto used to live. It's a Venice "where hotels are full, but there's only one dormitory of 30 beds for the homeless".

Gianfranco Bettin, the city official who looks after social problems, says rents are too high, but owners cannot resist a foreign visitor prepared to pay any price for a mid-city apartment.

"Children have to go all the way across town to school, because there aren't enough of them," complains Dr Marina Paties. The same is true of shops for basic necessities. "Even my plumber has gone to sell masks to tourists. Shouldn't the residents of Venice be saved first?"

The desertification is accompanied by an "easy-money" syndrome, says Bettin. Drugs are causing havoc, especially among gondoliers, who earn twice as much as a university professor. Entertainment is also becoming a problem: it is hard to find a bar open after 11pm.

Deprived of their city, young people are moving out in droves. Will older professional people, such as civil servants and bank employees, be forced to follow suit? Venice, according to one commentator, must broaden its employment base and, for this, patience is needed.

Will Massimo Cacciari have such patience?

He has repeatedly said he will not stand for re-election in 1997. "I am an intellectual who has shown that he can keep his feet firmly on the ground. I have given the local community several years of my life and I don't want to die in office."

But if this "radical reformist", as he calls himself, is looking for a national role, what better springboard could he have than Venice?

(July 7)

Nigeria tries to root out drug-runners

Michèle Maringues in Lagos

IN AN investigation of links between car dealers and money laundering, officers of Nigeria's National Drug Law Enforcement Agency recently raided the premises of several luxury car dealers in Lagos.

Some of the dealers who were later released and cleared of involvement in the traffic have been highly critical of the raid. The importation of luxury cars is only the most visible — and by far the least important — form of recycling profits from an international narcotics trade in which Nigerians over the past few years have carved out a niche for themselves.

But General Musa Bamalyi, head of the agency since early 1994, likes spectacular operations. It was he who urged the death penalty, not only for narcotics traffickers but their wives as well. Bamalyi says that he has "a war to win" and cannot afford to be too fussy. The general is reportedly incorruptible, unlike his three civilian predecessors at the head of the agency, all of whom had to leave their jobs in disgrace.

Since the end of the 1980s, Nigeria has become pivotal in the flow of drugs into Europe and the United States. The US authorities say 80 per cent of the heroin entering the country comes through Nigeria.

In March 1994, about the same time as Nigeria's new master, General Sani Abacha, was giving the go ahead to General Bamalyi to smash the drug networks, the US decided to withdraw Nigeria's credit rating and place it in the same category as countries widely known to be involved in drug trafficking, such as Algeria, Iran and Syria.

This withdrawal has had immediate economic consequences with the US vetoing all credit applications from these countries — particularly for World Bank money.

Nigeria's military regime worked hard last year to have its credit rating restored. With its corrupt elements weeded out and the services strengthened by an additional 500 recruits, the agency claims that it picked up 693 suspects last year, including 12 drug barons, and seized more then 90 kilos of heroin and about as much cocaine. But at the end of March, Nigeria was still on the list of rogue countries.

US Drug Enforcement Administration experts criticise their Nigerian counterparts for concentrating on small-time pushers and not touching the operational brains behind the networks. Stung by the charges, Nigeria's military government published a decree last month requiring financial institutions to report to Nigeria's Central Bank all transfers of sums in excess of $10,000, setting a ceiling on cash transactions and giving the agency discretionary powers to tap telephones.

The new regulations have caused much irritation in the banking community, but have been applauded as "courageous" by the United Nations ambassador to Nigeria, Walter Carrington. "Nigeria, specifically its Central Bank, now keeps a far more professional eye on big movements of money such as those taking place today through Kano," he said.

(July 8)

GUARDIAN WEEKLY
July 23 1995

Bangladeshi women begin to fight back

Corine Lesnes in Comilla charts the struggle of Sufia Begum

FIVE years ago Sufia Begum was what her religion, Islam, calls a virtuous woman: she was reluctant to shake hands with a man, and when her husband beat her, as he often did in the early days of their marriage, she said nothing. If she did happen to complain, her mother would invariably quote a proverb which said that the part of the body which had been beaten would "go to heaven".

Sufia Begum used to work in the fields round her village near Comilla, in eastern Bangladesh. For planting rice seedlings or potatoes, she was paid a third as much as men got for doing the same job. Until 1989 she never used her right to vote. "We'll take care of that for you," her husband explained.

Sufia Begum was not the most unhappy of women. She might occasionally have to go to bed without eating, but her feet were not maimed like those of the women who broke rocks by the riverside.

Feminists claim that rock-breaking represents social progress: it means that women are "getting tougher". In the old days they used to break only bricks, whereas now they are employed, like men, to break the rocks that boats unload on to the river banks. Bangladesh has mainly alluvial soil, as can be seen during the dry season, before the monsoon rains put much of it under water. Rocks are consequently in short supply. The Bangladeshis either import them or wait for them to be washed down by rivers flowing southwards from India. The women sit cross-legged under sunshades hammering away at their rocks from morning to evening. Sometimes the hammer misses and hits their toes, which are poorly protected by bits of car tyre.

The women are paid piecework rates for each basket of chippings they produce, but they are usually cheated by their foreman. However, the few I managed to speak to said that what they liked about their job were the flexible working hours, which enabled them to do their household chores in the morning before going out to break rocks until dusk.

Sufia Begum and Islam were not in conflict, for in Bangladesh it is a religion tinged with a certain gentle Bengali way of life. She would not go out unless she had to, and wore a simple sari, rather than one of those expensive black outfits that cover women from head to foot.



ILLUSTRATION: DESSIN DESELÇUK

She could not afford to stay at home, like certain leisured women in Dhaka who say they are delighted to live in purdah because they think it confers greater notability.

The case of Sufia Begum would seem to support the hypothesis that, while poverty sometimes fans the flames of Islamic fundamentalism, extreme poverty can only militate against Islam's attempt to force women to stay at home.

Sufia Begum's emotional life began inauspiciously. She spent what was supposed to be her first night of love sitting in the rain, after refusing to submit to the brutal behaviour of her husband. But she became a good wife to him — if not a good mother, for she had not yet had any children — when, all of a sudden, she became the standard-bearer of feminism in Comilla.

According to Saleem Samad, a journalist, "there are now hundreds of such Nasreens around the country". In August last year, the Bangladeshi novelist Taslima Nasreen took refuge in Europe after being prosecuted for blasphemy in Bangladesh.

The situation of Sufia Begum and women like her began to change when they decided to form their own groups. The initiative came from a non-governmental organisation called Nijera Kori ("self-management"), one of Bangladesh's 800 NGOs, which cover a wide variety of humanitarian sectors from illiteracy and help for the handicapped to the plight of rickshaw drivers.

Bangladesh is a country of NGOs par excellence. For once, it is not western organisations that call the tune; their financial aid is welcome, but self-help is the rule when it comes to the implementation of programmes. Thanks to the efforts of Zafrullah Chowdhury, a militant doctor who was the first to use female labour at his medical centre in Savar, Bangladesh now produces the full range of basic medicinal products and is self-sufficient in antibiotics.

The largest co-operative association in the country is the Grameen Bank, the "poor people's bank", whose system of mini-loans has served as a model in the West, notably in France. Set up 12 years ago, it lends mainly to women and has a workforce of 12,000. It has begun to equip itself with cellular telephones so that rice prices can be communicated more quickly.

Experts ascribe the Bangladeshis' determination to take responsibility for themselves partly to the nationalist tradition that resulted in the birth of the country in 1971, after the cyclone of November 1970 and the war of secession with Pakistan, and partly to a feeling of urgency. Bangladesh is just over half the size of the United Kingdom and has 120 million inhabitants; and the population is increasing at a rate of 2.5 million a year.

Nijera Kori's squads of women counsellors applied the same tactics to Sufia Begum's village as they had to other villages. They went from house to house informing women of their rights. The organisation, which is modest in size, provides neither food aid nor medical or social assistance.

The counsellors were not allowed into some houses because, one of them says, "mothers-in-law said we had come to turn them into Christians". Recently anti-NGO pronouncements by the mullahs have become more frequent. But the personnel of such organisations are not overly worried. "In the old days we used to get alarmed," says Father Klaus, who works in Chittagong. "Now we just let them talk. Usually only about one out of a hundred families take any notice."

Fatwas are issued by village councils which carry little weight — "It's rather like the village priest registering his disapproval," says a diplomat. Flurries of fatwas occur as and when it is politically expedient.

Some councils are worried about the fact that women will have their photographs taken for the elector's cards to be used at the next general election in 1996. The poll will pit two women against each other, the present prime minister, Khaleda Zia, and the leader of the Awami League, Sheikh Hasina.

SUFIA BEGUM held a press conference in the straw hut where the women's group meets twice a month. She sat on matting, surrounded by her assistants and the rank-and-file with babies in their arms.

There were only two men present — one of them young and bearded, who stared fixedly at the matting as he listened, and an older man who had dropped in on his way to the paddy fields, and who stood with his hoe on his shoulder, visibly tickled pink by the boldness of the younger generation. Sufia Begum explained that one of the main problems was the dowry system. It so happens — whatever people may think in the West — that this main instrument of female exploitation has less to do with Islam than with Hindu cultural traditions. In most Islamic countries where a dowry system is practised, it takes the form of a bride-price paid by the husband. In Bangladesh it is the wife's family that stumps up. The required contribution varies from region to region. The dowry may take the form of a television set, gold items, or cash worth roughly three times the annual salary of a farm worker.

Candidates for the bride's hand are not always totally disinterested. "Sometimes they take a second wife so they can buy an airplane ticket to go and work in the Middle East," says Sufia Begum. Sometimes, too, the husband beats his wife as a way of putting pressure on his in-laws to cough up the final instalment of the dowry if it has not all been paid at the time of the wedding.

Feminist lawyers say violence is common. But the situation is not nearly as scandalous as in India, where almost 5,000 women died from "accidental" burns in 1990.

Within the space of only a few years, the Comilla group has produced some startling results. Women got a pay rise after setting up road-blocks, and the difference between what they and men earned was reduced. When they address a mullah, who neither asks them to sit down nor is allowed to look them in the eyes, they do so with their backs to him. They now vote at elections, and organise their voting strategy in such a way that the mayor is forced to heed their views. "If I send a note to the mayor, he comes running along straight away," Sufia Begum says proudly.

The group also does its best to solve personal problems. Recently it had to deal with a complaint from a second wife, who felt she had been discriminated against when the husband died. A delegation of 50 women went to visit the mayor, who ensured that the inheritance was fairly shared. It would appear that violence has become less common, because any wife batterer risks the immediate opprobrium of other villagers.

Sufia Begum's own domestic situation has improved. Her husband, proud of being married to a village personality, is now better behaved. She lets him accompany her when she goes to Dhaka for a bureau meeting or a political demonstration.

It takes three hours to get from Comilla to Dhaka by bus. A few seats on the bus are reserved for women. Once they have been taken, the driver refuses to allow other women to board his vehicle. The reason he gives is that, when women travel standing up, men have to keep their distance — which means a lot of room for other potential passengers is wasted.

(July 4)

How to prevent crockery from flying

Jean-Michel Normand

FOR several years now, the manufacturers and retailers of dishwashers in France have had to come to terms with the fact that they cannot persuade more than one household out of three to buy one of their appliances. Sales of dishwashers were 787,000 in 1990, but will not exceed 740,000 this year.

What puzzles them is why washing up should be the last domestic chore to resist the process of mechanisation. After scrutinising the statistics of the French National Institute of Economic and Statistical Information (Insee) and consulting sociologists, they now have a better idea of why this should be so. But that does not make them feel any more optimistic.

The small size of French kitchens, the fall in the average number of people in each household, and the high price of such appliances cannot alone explain sluggish dishwasher sales, when 97 per cent of households possess a washing machine and 98 per cent a refrigerator.

It turns out that the apparently routine activity of doing the washing up plays a key social role: in some cases it can improve people's psychological equilibrium, and in others encourage harmonious relations between partners.

Insee notes that, unlike other chores, washing up is not something to which people are particularly averse: 80 per cent of men and 75 per cent of women regard it as "no bother", whereas ironing and window cleaning are found to be much more of a chore. It even seems that 5 per cent of men and women actually get a kick out of plunging their hands into warm water.

Another deep-rooted consumer trait is doubt as to the efficiency of dishwashers. Apparently some dishwasher owners carefully clean their cutlery before putting it into the machine.

But the most formidable obstacle is altogether different. In the hurly-burly of domestic life, doing the washing up often represents an area of compromise. It is one of those "negotiable chores", like the cooking or shopping.

The acquisition of a dishwasher may jeopardise a ritual that ensures a certain equilibrium. In other words, the husband may have nothing to gain from buying this extra piece of household equipment. Once he has been released from his obligation to do the washing up — even if he does it much less often than his wife — he may have to take on many more chores by way of compensation.

In a bid to overcome that obstacle, the household appliance manufacturers, Gifam, will launch an advertising campaign in mid-September. Its theme will be very down-to-earth: a dishwasher uses three to four times less water than washing up by hand, and therefore consumes less time and energy.

Gifam calculates — perhaps a trifle ambitiously — that it costs those without dishwashers an extra 31 francs (£4) a day. Those aware of the beneficial effects of doing the washing up will surely regard that as a trifling price to pay for domestic bliss.

(July 12)

Doctor of the well varnished truth

Roland Jaccard

Bruno Bettelheim
by Nina Sutton
Stock 758pp 180 francs

KURT EISSLER, director of the Freud Archives, once said maliciously of his old comrade Bruno Bettelheim that "he had all the trappings of a genius without being one". That was the reason for his prodigious success. Few psychoanalysts, apart — possibly — from Freud, enjoyed such celebrity during their lifetime: Bettelheim was both admired by the public throughout the world and unstintingly lauded by fellow psychoanalysts.

The Chicago Orthogenic School, which he set up to take in and treat autistic children, was quoted everywhere as an example to be followed, and his many books, especially his most celebrated one, The Empty Fortress, were regarded as the standard works on the subject.

Yet his name was surrounded by scandal only a few weeks after his suicide on March 13, 1990. The reputation of the great man was seriously dented in the United States: former pupils of the Orthogenic School accused him of being a racist brute, a charlatan, and a man whose chief talent was self-promotion.

Former colleagues stuck up for him only half-heartedly. One of them went so far as to compare the atmosphere at the Orthogenic School to that of a sect whose guru was Dr B.

The press immediately seized on the affair, started probing Bettelheim's Viennese past, asked questions about his university career, discovered that he had often doctored the truth, and accused him of having plagiarised the thesis of a psychiatry teacher, Dr Julius Heuscher, to write one of his best-sellers, The Uses Of Enchantment. However, Heuscher ran to his defence, saying: "We are all plagiarists — I plagiarise."

In other words, all that remained of the saint who had devoted all his energies to his young patients was the image of an unscrupulous and ambitious man, who had been thrown out of heaven and sent to hell without even being allowed time to rest in purgatory.

Nina Sutton's biography of Bettelheim, the first to appear, is admirable in every respect: without concealing any of his weaknesses or the sometimes odious sides of his behaviour, she pieces together a portrait that carries the ring of truth. So he wasn't a saint? So much the better. Her 758-page book, the result of four years' painstaking work, charts the itinerary of a man who, to my mind, was one of the most engaging figures in the history of psychoanalysis.

It should be noted that Sutton's task was made particularly difficult by the fact that Bettelheim did not want his biography to be written at all and that shortly before committing suicide he destroyed most of his archives. Moreover, his daughter Ruth, with whom he was not on good terms, refused to see Sutton.

Bettelheim was born in Vienna on August 28, 1903. His father, a wood merchant, had syphilis, which was incurable at that time. Many years later, Bettelheim wrote to one of his friends: "Part of the trouble was that our parents were good parents and tried to shield us from the family tragedy, which meant that we could not be angry with them."

Towards the end of his life, at a party where there was much talk of how people could protect themselves against Aids, Bettelheim shocked those present by saying: "I was four years old when my father found out that he had syphilis. For the next 20 years, he never touched my mother again. Aids patients can do the same thing!"

The teenage Bettelheim had a melancholy temperament not all that different from that of Arthur Schnitzler (one of his favourite authors) and affected a kind of frivolous pessimism. He aspired to becoming a philosopher and man about town.

It is instructive to note which authors left their mark on him during this period, which was crucial to his intellectual development. First there was Hans Vaihinger, who contended that in order to survive the best thing was to behave "as if" life had a meaning and our illusions a value.

Bettelheim also read Friedrich Lange, the author of the monumental History Of Materialism, who rejected the whole notion of metaphysics. And lastly there was Theodor Lessing, the philosopher of "self-hatred", who was the first person, according to Bettelheim, who made him realise "that history is not an account of man's progress over time, but that this progress and the meaning of historical events are only projections of man's wishful thinking".

He had never heard of Freud, when a young psychoanalyst, Otto Fenichel, charmed Bettelheim's sweetheart by describing Freud's

He likened the student protesters of the sixties to the Hitler Youth movement

lectures to her, analysing her dreams and preaching sexual liberation. Bettelheim, convinced of his own ugliness and still haunted by his father's illness, took a violent dislike to Fenichel and decided to hold psychoanalysis in contempt.

But next day, after school, he rushed to the Deuticke bookshop and bought a copy of Freud's The Psychopathology Of Everyday Life. "I soon realised that my Victorian family . . . would be utterly shocked to find me perusing such obscene literature," he remembered later. "My solution was to hide it from them by taking it to school and reading it there surreptitiously."

Although he had ambitions of becoming a philosopher, Bettelheim soon had to trim his sails. He had no option but to take up business studies and, at 24, become a registered wholesale wood merchant.

His friends were irritated by his snobbery, grandiosity and tendency to lord it over them. But he redeemed himself with his sense of humour and generosity. He married Gina, a young woman who was being analysed by Richard Sterba. It was she who treated Patsy, a disturbed American girl who had been brought by her mother to Vienna, where she lived with the Bettelheims for seven years.



Bettelheim: engaging figure despite weaknesses PHOTO: E HAMILTON WEST

But their marriage soon turned sour. Gina felt a certain degree of repulsion for her husband, and rebuked him for pinching other people's ideas and boasting unjustifiably. True, he earned a lot of money, but he had been forced to give up his academic ambitions; true, he had married a very beautiful woman, but everything had gone wrong. He was ripe for psychoanalysis — with Sterba, the man who had analysed his wife.

Treatment was interrupted a year later, in March 1938, when the Nazis entered Vienna. In early June, Bettelheim was arrested and sent to Dachau. He described what happened after that in The Informed Heart. His four months in Dachau, followed by six more in Buchenwald, were a harrowing experience, but he later admitted that, paradoxically, they had been beneficial.

Then came exile in Chicago, where he made a name for himself as a specialist in human behaviour in the camps. Everything went well for him in the US. But, like another Viennese émigré, the film-maker Erich von Stroheim, also the son of tradespeople, Bettelheim reinvented his past so as to impress the Americans and assure his future. His PhD in aesthetics turned into a PhD in psychology; the American girl treated by his wife became his patient; and his release from Buchenwald was engineered by none other than Eleanor Roosevelt.

He claimed to have known Freud through his family, and even to have undergone a training analysis with him. But to the end of his life he was haunted by the idea that someone would end up discovering he was a fraud. In fact it would be more accurate to say he was a fraud several times over: he massaged statistics at the Orthogenic School so he could boast convincingly about his success at curing autism; and he gave a highly embellished account of the therapeutic environment he had created.

When asked what he thought of old age, he would reply: "Above all don't get there!" The older Bettelheim got, the more capricious, whingeing, sarcastic and arrogant he became.

He also liked to provoke. For example, he likened the protesting students of the sixties to members of the Hitler Youth movement; he lambasted the conformism of teenagers brought up in kibbutzim (which led to his being heartily disliked in Israel); he was scathing about The Diary Of Anne Frank and its naïve confidence in mankind; he derided the indulgent attitude of French intellectuals towards communism; and he contended that what made the Nazi camps "new, unique, terrifying, was that millions, like lemmings, marched themselves to their own death".

This last remark resulted in his being labelled an "anti-Semitic Jew" by his enemies. It was as if, towards the end of his life, he was harking back to Lessing and that "self-hatred" depicted with such disturbing panache by so many Viennese writers.

On top of that, after watching his second wife decline physically writing A Good Enough Parent, Bettelheim somehow managed to have a terminal row with his favourite daughter Ruth, who was the only one of his children who chose to exercise the same profession as him. His relations with Jacquelyn Sanders, his successor at the Orthogenic School, were scarcely any better. Indeed, for a time he was banned from the premises of the school.

He told close friends he was thinking increasingly of committing suicide. He even tracked down a Dutch doctor who was prepared to give him a helping hand; but the supreme irony was that the doctor died of a heart attack a fortnight before Bettelheim was due to go to the Netherlands.

On March 13, 1990, 42 years to the day after the Anschluss, Bettelheim took leave of this world with that "old Viennese arrogance" which had earned him so many enemies, and which, whatever Eissler may have claimed, was a component of his genius. That is something which has not escaped Nina Sutton, whose meticulous and unvarnished biography pays him a fitting final tribute.

(May 12)

A first for Richard

OPERA

Nicole Duault

RICHARD the Lionheart, who died in 1199, is buried at the Abbey of Fontevraud in the Loire Valley. As part of its two-year season of musical events centred on the Plantagenet king, the abbey put on in June the first French production of an obscure but very rewarding Handel opera, Riccardo I, Re d'Inghilterra, with Christophe Rousset conducting. Decca/L'Oiseau-Lyre made a recording of the opera at Fontevraud, which it will issue in 1997. Another performance of the opera, with the same conductor and singers, will be given at the Beaune Festival on July 22.

"I chose Riccardo I," says Rousset, "because of all the operas Handel composed in the 1720s it's quite simply the one I believe to be the most remarkable."

If so, why was Riccardo I consigned to oblivion after a single series of performances in London in 1727, with the celebrated castrato Senesino in the title role and the rival prima donnas Francesca Cuzzoni and Faustina Bordoni as Costanza and Pulcheria respectively?

It is true that Riccardo I is an occasional work which Handel composed to celebrate the coronation of George II in 1727 and his own act of naturalisation as a British citizen the same year. But the reason for the brevity of its career had less to do with the nature of the work than with the verbal and sometimes physical set-tos that took place between the two fiery prima donnas. Indeed, it was they whose bickering had prevented the first performance of the opera a year earlier.

Handel re-used some of the Riccardo I arias in Tolomeo in 1728 and in Scipione two years after that. Then the opera was forgotten for more than two centuries, until the Handel Society resurrected it briefly at Sadler's Wells in 1964.

There is so much interesting music to be found in Handel's prodigiously huge output that genuine revelations like Riccardo I can sometimes go unnoticed. The most attractive feature of the opera is the spirited manner in which it portrays six historical figures and describes an episode in the life of Richard the Lionheart.

On his way to the Third Crusade (1189-1192), he took a mere 10 days to take Cyprus from its despot, Isaac Comnenus, and met Berengaria of Navarre (Costanza in the opera), whom he married a week later when still on the island.

The opera offers a tightly constructed succession of unexpected events — a storm, a false drowning, a recognition, trickery, treachery, kidnappings and battles — which carry the plot along as briskly as they do the music.

The great coherence of the Fontevraud production derived from the fact that the main singers possessed an identical technical mastery, although singing in different registers.

(June 11/12)

Le Monde

Directeur: Jean-Marie Colombani



Some of the refugees expelled by Bosnian Serbs from Srebenica watch behind razor-wire at a UN base near Tuzla PHOTOGRAPH: DARKO BANDIC

Refugees Tell Tales of Serb Brutality

John Pomfret in Tuzla

BOSNIAN SERB forces that expelled up to 40,000 people from the U.N.-designated "safe area" of Srebrenica robbed their victims, abducted young women, incarcerated thousands of military-aged men and carried out summary executions, witnesses say.

Dozens of witnesses interviewed over last week in Tuzla, where the refugees from Srebrenica have been brought, provided detailed accounts of killings, robbery and the sudden disappearance of young women into the hands of soldiers. In some cases, such as the execution of 20 military-aged men, three separate witnesses provided what appeared to be corroboration that the killings did occur. In other incidents, witnesses gave specific details about the abduction of young women but were unable to name them.

Officers of the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees agency plan to investigate the allegations, said Alvin Gonzaga, a U.N. official in Tuzla. Officials from the International Committee of the Red Cross also plan to begin tracing lost people. While they will focus on the fate of several thousand military-aged Muslim men from Srebrenica who were taken into Serb custody, the officials said they would also hunt for the missing women.

While the alleged abuses appear to be more random than systematic, they contradict public guarantees by Radovan Karadzic, political leader of the Bosnian Serbs, that "we Serbs have no problems with the Muslims." The reports also clash with assurances made by U.N. soldiers to the Muslim civilians that if they surrendered peacefully to the Serbs they would be allowed to leave Serb-held territory safely.

The reports of Serbs detaining women mirror their actions during previous conquests of Muslim territory, when Serb soldiers incarcerated Muslim and Croat women and raped them.

Esref Becirovic, a Bosnian physician who has worked at the Tuzla refugee camp in recent days, said none of the hundreds of women he has treated over the past few days has said she had been raped. "But many said they saw the Serbs take women away with them and the women did not return," he said. "That's what worries me. Where are those girls now?"

As the Serb army entered Srebrenica, tens of thousands of Muslim residents fled to the nearby village of Potocari, the site of the last U.N. base inside the safe area not overrun by the Serbs. On Wednesday last week, Serbs entered that village and took the U.N. troops' weapons. Bosnian Serb television showed pictures of Ratko Mladic, the Serbs' military commander, telling frightened Muslim civilians that they had nothing to worry about and that his men would soon bus them to Muslim-held territory to the north.

At first, refugees said, Mladic's soldiers treated the Muslims well, handing out bread, water and chocolate. But then, according to witnesses, things changed. The Serbs began to drink, and confusion gave way to terror.

Like the rest of the inhabitants of Srebrenica, Adila Palic, 31, fled to Potocari. She then took a bus for Muslim-controlled territory. At the village of Kravica, near the town of Bratunac, a band of Serbs stopped her convoy of six trucks and began inspecting the crowd. From her truck alone, Palic said, Serb gunmen took six women.

Palic identified the eldest as Dzulja Oric, a woman in her forties. She contended that the Serbs took that woman because Dzulja is related to Nasir Oric, the commander of the mostly Muslim Bosnian army unit in Srebrenica, who left for Tuzla on May 20 and is wanted by the Bosnian Serb army for "war crimes."

"They told us straight out that they would rape Dzulja," Palic said, quoting Serb gunmen. "'That's what we're going to do to all the Orics,' they said."

Palic said five other women were ordered from the truck. She identified two of them as Behija and Nusveta. She did not know the names of the other three but added that all five were "pretty and young."

On Wednesday last week teenager Senada Cvrk was with about 20 military-aged men who had yet to be separated from the thousands of refugees at Potocari. Serb soldiers then took them away. The next morning, shortly before her bus left, Cvrk said, she was wandering in a field outside the old car battery factory where Srebrenica's refugees had been placed. She had gone there to find water. Instead, she said, she discovered the bodies of her friends, stacked in a pile with their hands tied behind their backs.

Earlier that morning, Admir Efendic, 13, and his sister, Enisa, 16, were sitting in buses waiting to depart. They were looking out the windows, they said, and saw a line of about 20 men standing with their backs to the buses about 150 feet away — again near the old car battery factory. A fusillade of Serb gunfire erupted, and the men fell, they said.

Sabaheta Becirovic and her sister, Sadeta, were on a bus that was approaching the end of Serb-held territory before dawn on Thursday last week. Serb gunmen boarded the bus and began taking girls and women from it. Their mother, Sefika, reacted quickly, throwing the few bags they had packed on top of the young women, burying them in their scant possessions.

Vesna Salkic, 29, said that Serb soldiers, after rounding up most of the Muslim men, turned their attention toward the women. At one point she saw two women walking with U.N. troops. Serb soldiers approached them and said, "Come with us," she recalled. "UNPROFOR (the U.N. command) has promised we won't hurt you."

The women went reluctantly and were taken to a house near the car battery factory. Salkic and others said they heard screams from the house but were afraid to investigate. U.N. soldiers also were not allowed near it.

Why No Tests In France?

EDITORIAL

FRANCE'S unwise decision to resume nuclear testing was an invitation to the kinds of protests and denunciations being generated by Greenpeace's skillful demonstration of political theater. But even before Greenpeace set sail for the test site, several Pacific countries had vehemently objected to France's intention of carrying out the explosions at a Pacific atoll.

At a recent meeting in Cannes the newly installed president of France, Jacques Chirac, confidently explained to Japan's prime minister, Tomiichi Murayama that the tests would be entirely safe. If they are so safe, Murayama replied, why doesn't Chirac hold them in France?

The dangers of these tests to France are substantial. The chances of physical damage and the release of radioactivity to the atmosphere are very low. But the symbolism of a European country's holding its tests on the other side of the earth, in a vestige of its former colonial empire, is proving immensely damaging to France's standing among its friends in Asia.

France says that it needs to carry out the tests to ensure the reliability of its nuclear weapons. Those weapons, like most of the American nuclear armory, were developed to counter a threat from a power that has collapsed. The great threat now, to France and the rest of the world, is the possibility of nuclear bombs in the hands of reckless and aggressive governments elsewhere.

The international effort to discourage the spread of nuclear weapons is a fragile enterprise, depending mainly on trust and good will. But over the past half-century, the effort has been remarkably successful.

It depends on a bargain in which the nuclear powers agree to move toward nuclear disarmament at some indefinite point in the future, and in the meantime to avoid flaunting these portentous weapons.

That's the understanding that France is now undermining. The harassment by Greenpeace is the least of the costs that these misguided tests will exact.

China Lands Punches on Uncle Sam

OPINION

Jim Hoagland

CHINA'S communist government has seized every opportunity handed it by the terminally clumsy Clinton administration to land a hard punch on Uncle Sam's exposed chin. The consistency, vehemence and intolerance of China's reactions to American missteps raise two vital, ever present questions:

What is going on here? And what does the world do about it?

Getting Question One right is essential to answering Question Two. And the first necessary step is to see this as a China problem, not a Clinton problem.

An obvious point? The whining coming out of the American business community in China and from the Sinologist academic community in the United States suggests otherwise. Bill Clinton's vacillation — not China's own troubled economics and politics — is to blame for collapsing business deals and turmoil in the relationship, these folks say.

"In the view of many China specialists — and reportedly in the view of many senior Chinese officials — the current frost in U.S.-China relations grows largely out of a string of U.S. policy decisions and statements," The Post's Thomas W. Lippman reported a fortnight ago.

Beware such views. Those with careers and ambitions vested in the status quo are the storm birds of international relations. They are taking wing to call out warnings as dark clouds roll in over a privileged but flawed relationship, just as the Arabists and the pro-Iraqi business groups did when Saddam Hussein set himself on a collision course with the United States.

Then the Arabists at the State Department (and a few U.S. senators led by Bob Dole) explained that Saddam was misunderstood and could be co-opted by the right policies. No such policies existed. And they do not exist in the case of China. Clinton's biggest failure has been not to understand that hard reality.

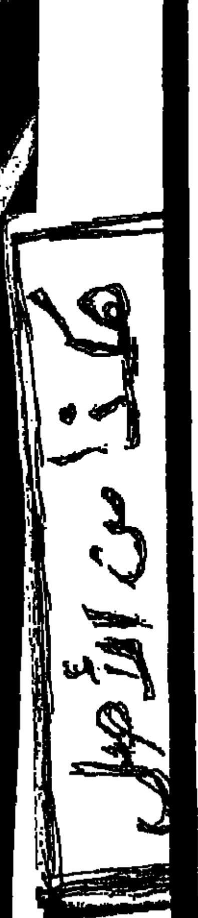
Out of China come strong signals that the power struggle over who will rule after paramount leader Deng Xiaoping has entered a fierce new, probably final stage. The clearest signal of all is the sudden free fall in U.S.-China relations. This tips the hand of the Stalinists who are riding their anti-Americanism to power.

China's arrest of U.S. citizen Harry Wu and its decision to charge him with the capital crime of "espionage" are designed to force Washington's hand. So was China's recent shipping of missiles to Pakistan and the demand by Beijing for diplomatic reparations from the U.S. for having granted Taiwan's president a visa.

Li Peng, the thuggish prime minister who engineered the Tiananmen massacre, and his allies not only relish confrontation with America, they need it.

The international community should give support to the Chinese democrats like Wu and Wei Jingsheng, who have risked their lives to end tyranny in China. In particular, the Nobel Peace Prize committee should let it be known that it has settled on China's democrats, personified by Wu and Wei, as the collective nominee for this year's prize.

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Filipina Maid 'Killed in Self-Defense'

John Lancaster in Al Alyn, United Arab Emirates

JUDGING by the evidence presented at her murder trial recently, 15-year-old Sarah Balabagan was not acting without provocation when she plunged a large knife 32 times into Almas Mohammed Baloushi, killing the man for whom she worked as a maid.

Just weeks before the killing last July 19, the teenager from the Philippines had complained to an associate that her employer repeatedly grabbed her breasts and offered "money and gold in exchange for her virginity," according to an account compiled by the Philippine Embassy.

Balabagan, now 16, said that on the night of the killing, her employer held a knife to her neck as he raped her. She said that during the struggle, he inflicted a small wound on her head and tried to strangle her before she grabbed his knife and began stabbing him. A doctor who examined her the following day corroborated her account, finding physical evidence of rape.

But that was not enough to get her exonerated.

Although an Islamic court ruled last month that Balabagan had, in fact, been raped on the night of the killing — and awarded her $27,000 in damages from the dead man's estate — the same three-judge panel found her guilty of manslaughter, fined her $40,500 and sentenced her to seven years in prison.

The contradictory verdict stunned the large Filipino community in the United Arab Emirates and underscored what human rights groups — and many Asian diplomats — contend is the failure of oil-rich Persian Gulf states to safeguard the rights of foreign workers, especially tens of thousands of Asian women who serve as maids.

"It was a legitimate exercise of the right of self-defense, of honor, which was in effect affirmed by the court in its judgment," Philippine Ambassador Roy Seneres said of the Balabagan case. "We are at a loss as to why she was sentenced."

Balabagan's case was unusual only for its violent denouement.

The Gulf Arab states are full of domestic workers from poorer Asian countries such as the Philippines, India, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka, where the prospect of earning $200 a month as a maid in a private household abroad often seems much brighter than alternatives at home.

While many such workers fulfill their expectations, others fall victim to abuses: sexual harassment, rape, beatings and virtual enslavement to employers who hold their passports and can prevent them from leaving the country — or household — without the employer's permission. Some are preyed upon by recruiters who demand huge shares of their earnings, human rights monitors say.

Their vulnerability is exacerbated by the attitude of many Persian Gulf governments, which generally exempt domestic servants from labor laws that apply to their own citizens or to more highly skilled workers from abroad, according to Aziz Abu-Hamad of Human Rights Watch-Middle East.

An investigation by the group into working conditions for Asian maids in Kuwait found that "while most domestic servants . . . do not suffer at the hands of their employers, there exists a significant and pervasive pattern of rape, physical assault and mistreatment of Asian maids that takes place with impunity."

About 2,000 Asian maids in Kuwait — 135,000 worked there last year — seek refuge in their embassies each year, the report said. Cases include that of a 20-year-old Sri Lankan maid, identified only as S.B., who was admitted to a Kuwait hospital with two broken ankles, vaginal bleeding and "lacerations to her labia and rectal area that required stitches."

"S.B. told us that on the day she was admitted to the hospital, her employer had followed her into a room she was cleaning, locked the door and raped her. After he raped her, he threw her off the balcony and she landed on the ground several stories below," the report said.

THE STUDY went on to note that most such stories never see the light of day. "The obstacles to reporting are considerable," it said. "As a result of the pervasive use of debt bondage, passport deprivation and confinement, no one outside the family would necessarily know what is happening to the maid and it would be extremely difficult for her to escape."

Asian governments often have participated in the conspiracy of silence, fearing loss of remittances if they make a fuss. But with public anger growing in the Philippines over treatment of Filipino workers abroad, official complacency appears to be over in that country.

"There are lots of nice people who are Muslims, but these very few who create problems destroy the image of Islam, and I hope these governments can make their citizens realize this," said Isidro A[illegible]gada, a member of a presidential commission on overseas workers who recently visited the UAE capital, Abu Dhabi.

A senior UAE official, who spoke on condition of anonymity, said: "We have 80,000 Filipinos in the UAE, and if there are one or two problems it doesn't mean it is all pervasive . . . I have a maid at home and I am not allowed to mistreat her because she can complain to the police and I will be punished."

The official described the Balabagan verdict as "quite minimal because she should have been hanged under (Islamic law)," and added: "Because of the circumstances I think it was very much diluted. They were at ease with the trial . . . That's why we reported it in our newspapers."

Seneres said the Balabagan verdict has been appealed. "She doesn't deserve to stay a day more, or a minute more, in jail," he said.

Japanese PM Plans War Apology

T.R. Reid in Tokyo

FACING serious political trouble in a national election on Sunday, Japan's pacifist Prime Minister Tomiichi Murayama has made a daring decision: He plans to send official letters expressing "humble apologies" to hundreds of victims of Japanese brutality during World War II.

Chief Cabinet Secretary Kozo Igarashi said the unusual plan would be announced this week — just before the election for the upper house of the national Diet, or parliament — as part of a broader plan of aid and compensation for so-called "comfort women" in several Asian nations.

"Comfort women" is the term used to describe the hundreds of thousands of women who were forced to serve as sex slaves for Japanese soldiers fighting in various Asian nations during the war. About 1,000 of these women are believed to be alive today, and each one will receive a personal letter from the prime minister, Igarashi said, as well as cash and medical care.

If Asian nations accept the step as a sincere Japanese apology, the letters might help alleviate lingering bitterness toward Japan in the region. The forced prostitution — which Japan has only acknowledged in the past five years — is one of the cruelest memories of Japan's harsh colonial rule over much of east Asia in the 1940s.

In domestic political terms, though, the move is a gamble, because any form of apology for World War II has proven controversial here. But it is something Murayama — long a bitter critic of Japan's aggression in the war — believes in personally. And the prime minister is in such hot water politically that a dramatic move may be worth a try.

The coming election will choose 126 members of the Diet's upper house. Because the upper house has only limited powers, elections for half its seats every three years are often meaningless. For Murayama, however, this one could prove momentous.

Polls and pundits suggest that Murayama's Socialist Party could lose up to three-quarters of the 41 seats it has at stake. In normal times, Japanese political tradition would demand that the chairman of the losing party resign to take responsibility. And if Murayama were to step down as party leader, he would give up the prime minister's spot as well.

Even if voting day turns into disaster for the Socialists, Murayama might avoid the worst-case scenario. The 71-year-old heads an unlikely liberal-conservative coalition government. The parties can't seem to agree on a possible replacement, so Murayama clings to his job despite meager approval ratings. A big loss on election day would presumably weaken him even more.

There are some 20 parties competing in the election campaign. They range from major political forces like the Liberal Democratic Party — the most conservative of the major parties — and the reform-minded New Frontier Party to tiny, ad-hoc groupings such as the UFO Party, the Refreshing New Party and the Sports and Peace Party, headed by a pro wrestler.

The campaign has failed to grab the attention of the public; voter apathy is so strong that many experts think the turnout will drop below 50 percent for the first time in a national election.

All parties seem to be presenting similar, if vague, plans to revive the sputtering economy. The issue agenda is so blank that more than two dozen of the candidates around the country are TV, movie or sports personalities hoping to trade on their famous names.

In those circumstances, it could make good political sense for Murayama to offer his bold proposal on the comfort women.

Igarashi said the government will launch a fund-raising campaign this week called "The Asian Peace and Friendship Fund for Women,"



Murayama: will send letter expressing 'humble apologies'

which will collect private donations plus government money to provide compensation and treatment for any survivor of the sex-slave platoons.

When these funds are distributed to the surviving comfort women, they will be sent with a letter, signed by the prime minister, expressing "humble apologies" for the suffering the Imperial Japanese Army caused the women half a century ago. The apology, Igarashi said, will be expressed in highly respectful, subservient language — a linguistic form of groveling.

The proposal for a fund-raising campaign was set forth tentatively last month. Some of the surviving women praised the idea, as did the government of South Korea, the nation where the largest number of survivors live. Others said the plan was inadequate.

Last month, when Murayama pushed for passage of a formal parliamentary resolution of "deep remorse" for Japan's aggression, his efforts seemed to shore up his standing with the public. Although veterans' groups and nationalist conservatives are bitterly opposed, opinion polls here repeatedly show that most people agree Japan should apologize for its role in the war.

AIDS 'Cure' Controversy

John Schwartz

A FEDERAL advisory panel has recommended allowing researchers to proceed with a controversial AIDS treatment that calls for transplanting a baboon's bone marrow into a human patient.

The procedure involves taking treated marrow cells from a baboon and injecting them into the patient. Researchers hope that the simian cells, specially treated to reduce the chance of rejection by the recipient, will provide the immune response that the patient's own body cannot. Baboons are not infected by HIV, the virus that causes AIDS. Citing safety concerns, the FDA blocked the experiment earlier this year.

The experiment would be conducted in San Francisco by University of California AIDS specialist Steven G. Deeks. Last week a meeting of the FDA's Biological Response Modifiers Advisory Committee was held to discuss the concerns in a public forum.

Panel members seemed moved by the impassioned testimony of friends and family of Jeff Getty, the 38-year-old San Francisco AIDS activist who is the most likely subject of the test. Doctors have estimated that he has less than a year to live; his health is too precarious to allow travel.

Getty's family came to the meeting ready to face down a room full of dilatory bureaucrats. Getty's sister Kim, barely holding back tears, said, "If I don't do my job fast enough, I lose customers. If you don't do your job fast enough, people die . . . What if you are sitting on a solution to my brother's life, and he dies?"

But the members of the advisory panel, while insistent that strong precautions be taken to ensure that the potential for cross-species infection didn't introduce new diseases into the human population, were unanimous in supporting the preliminary experiment.

The panel, however, did not share the family's optimism about the experiment's potential benefits to Getty. Although several members said it would provide valuable information for future attempts to bolster the human immune system, panel member Hugh Auchincloss, Jr. of Massachusetts General Hospital grimly predicted that "the likelihood that this will work is extremely small." He added that the difficult procedure "will probably hasten his death and not prevent it."

FDA officials warned that the potential risks of cross-species transplants, known as xenotransplants, should be better understood before more patients undergo similar treatment. Some voiced worries about viruses that could pass from animals into humans — "zoonoses." They noted that since AIDS patients already have defective immune systems, and since the treatment calls for further immune suppression to keep the body from rejecting the baboon cells, the risk of bringing new diseases into the human population could be increased.

The agents of several human diseases are believed to have evolved from viruses that first infected other species, including some strains of influenza, AIDS and the Ebola virus. Researchers said the two baboons that have been selected for the transplantation experiment are known to have five viruses that theoretically could infect the patient, and that breeding completely "clean" baboons would take several years and would be prohibitively expensive. The patient and researchers working with him will have to submit to regular screenings for disease.

If the FDA decides to let the experiment go forward — a decision could come within weeks — and if Getty still meets the physical criteria, then the injections could begin by the end of the summer.

Getty's mother said her son was aware of the risks, but wanted the chance to be part of a possible cure for AIDS. "He doesn't want to die in a hospice — he wants to go out fighting."

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Rising Son Strikes Out in America

T.R. Reid in Tokyo

FOR AN American baseball fan, watching the All-Star Game on Tuesday last week was simplicity itself: pop a cold one, plop into the Barcalounger, and power up the tube. For Japanese fans, though, watching the big game required sterner stuff.

Clutching umbrellas and rain slickers on a moist, muggy morning — the first pitch was thrown at 9:30 a.m., Tokyo time — fans by the thousands gathered on sidewalks and in public squares all over Japan to watch a fuzzy image of the game on large-screen outdoor TV sets. "I can't really say it's comfortable here," said Hideki Nomura, who was seated on the wet pavement outside Tokyo's Shibuya Station, peering out from his umbrella. "But what the heck — there's no way I would miss this game."

It was worth the trouble for Nomura and other Japanese fans because the National League's starting pitcher in this year's All-Star Game in Arlington, Texas, was the dominant hero of Japan's pop culture right now: Hideo "Tornado" Nomo, the Los Angeles Dodgers rookie forkballer who got his start playing for the Kintetsu Buffaloes in Japan's Pacific League.

Nomo's flawless performance against American League batters in his two innings brought huge cheers from the sidewalk fans here. When he left the game, one Japanese network abruptly ended its live broadcast and switched to replays of Nomo's work.

As the first Japanese player to make it big in major league baseball, Nomo stands out as good news in a year that has brought recession, natural disaster and terrorist crime to this normally safe and prosperous country. It's not surprising, then, that every game Nomo pitches is televised live to a rapt audience here — even though an American night game usually starts shortly after dawn on this side of the International Date Line.

The "Nomo boom" has limits, of course, in a country that gives top priority to hard work and diligent study. Few Japanese companies have TV sets at the work site, and not many waived the rules for a little thing such as the nation's first U.S. all-star.

At Kintetsu, the big railroad and travel company that owns Nomo's Japanese baseball team, the Buffaloes, spokesman Akio Hata said everyone is thrilled by Nomo's success in America. But Hata seemed stunned when asked earlier whether employees might watch the game at the office this morning. "Why, that would be a violation of our work rules," he said solemnly.

Ditto for Nomo's alma mater, Seijo Industrial High School in Osaka. "We have examinations scheduled for Wednesday morning," a school administrator said. "Nobody here is going to be watching a baseball game."

Still, there was enough interest that the All-Star Game — or at least, those innings Nomo pitched — was broadcast live on two networks. To accommodate people who left home for work or shopping, there were more than 30 locations around the country where the game was shown on outdoor TV screens roughly three stories tall, with fans crowding parks and sidewalks to get a better view.

The characters for Nomo's first name mean "hero" in Japanese, and the 26-year-old strikeout artist has lived up to the moniker this year.

This baseball-loving country has always viewed the American game as its pinnacle. The American major leagues are known here as the "Big League," a linguistic step above the Japanese majors, known as the "Pro League." U.S. players — particularly power hitters — are considered so awesome that no Japanese pro team can have more than two Americans on the roster.

To have a Japanese ballplayer succeed in the "Big League" has long been a dream of baseball fans here. The only other Japanese national to make the majors, Masanori "Mashi" Murakami, had an efficient but brief career as a San Francisco Giants pitcher in 1964-5.

It was thus considered amazing when Nomo pulled down a $2 million signing bonus last winter, more amazing still when he joined the Dodgers' starting rotation, and downright phenomenal when he won six straight games and became the National League strikeout leader. To have a Japanese player in the U.S. All-Star Game is, as the magazine Sunday Mainichi put it in a huge headline, "A Genuine American Dream."

Last week, when Nomo was named the NL starting pitcher, it was front-page news.

Hideo Nomo pitches into his first All-Star game PHOTOGRAPH: TIM SHARP

Almost as startling as Nomo's success, to read the dispatches from the phalanx of Japanese reporters covering the 26-year-old full-time, is the warm welcome he has received from U.S. fans.

It is conventional wisdom here that racial prejudice against Asians is part and parcel of American life. Three years ago, when the major leagues initially blocked the sale of the Seattle Mariners to investors including Japanese Nintendo chief Hiroshi Yamauchi, the standard explanation here was that America was too "racist" to tolerate a Japanese presence in the national pastime.

But Nomo's experience has been the opposite. Not only Dodgers Manager Tommy Lasorda, but U.S. sportswriters and fans have treated the newcomer not as an Asian or an outsider, but simply as a terrific pitcher.

"Even though relations between the U.S. and Japan are pretty shaky these days," wrote Toshifumi Kono, a correspondent for the Mainichi Shimbun newspaper, "there is no bitterness at all when the Japanese flag and the K sign are waved in American stadiums this season — because a dream is coming true."

In a sense, Hideo Nomo's success story matches that of Chad Rowan, the 460-pound Hawaiian leviathan who is the senior Grand Champion of sumo wrestling, the ancient game that is part sport and part religious ritual.

There was some grumbling among nationalists when Rowan first earned his exalted rank at the top of the sumo hierarchy. But today he is one of the most popular and most respected sumo stars.

IN A DECIDEDLY sickly economy, Nomo is one of the few brand names that sells out in Japan. Managers of a chain of souvenir stores, the Major League Baseball Japan Shops, say any item with Nomo's name or number sells out the minute it arrives. Prices run about $35 for a T-shirt bearing Nomo's number 16, and $100 for a sweat shirt autographed by the hero himself.

The most likely prospect to be the next Nomo at the moment is the top hitter in Japanese baseball, an earnest 21-year-old who goes by the single name Ichiro and plays for a Kobe-based team called the Orix Blue Wave.

"Ichiro, hey, he could definitely play in the majors," says Francisco Cabrera, a former Atlanta Braves catcher who played for the Blue Wave.

To have other Japanese players follow in Nomo's footsteps would be a source of pride here, but not necessarily an unalloyed joy. "Ichiro may be the next to go," reported the magazine Sunday Mainichi. "If he goes too, what's left for the Japanese leagues?"

A Bookstore Ventures Into Soweto

Lynne Duke in Soweto

THE TOWNSHIP students who visited the Imfundo-Thuto bookstore last month demanded that proprietor Solomon Sikakane, a black man like them, procure more books on Africa by Africans, and more about Malcolm X. They advised him not to stock the shelves with titles in Afrikaans, the language of the former white-minority government.

"One has got to be extremely careful in connection with the liberation demands. One should not go against them," Sikakane explained. He dutifully ordered the books his market demanded.

On the white side of the bookstore's management, Barbara Malk said she has found little interest among retail book traders in an outlet in a black area. "They said black people don't read," she said, rejecting that notion, along with the fear and other attitudes that prevent most of Malk's white friends from venturing to Soweto to see her business venture.

Such are the vicissitudes of an unusual partnership opening the first general bookstore in this sprawling black township southwest of Johannesburg, known for often violent opposition to the apartheid system of racial separation that prevailed before installation of a national-unity government last year.

The new shop is an oasis in an area in desperate need of educational opportunities, but it also is a sobering commentary on apartheid's legacy: an area of at least 2 million people had no book store until Imfundo-Thuto's opening last month. The two words in the store's hyphenated name are Zulu and Sotho for education.

Sikakane and Malk, who held a grand opening two weeks ago attended by political and cultural luminaries, plan not only to sell books but also to hold reading circles for children, computer classes for youngsters, literacy training for adults and book supply networks for schools and churches.

The unlikely business pair's venture is in a shopping plaza built last fall with 77 shops, 31 of them owned by blacks, and a movie complex in Soweto's Dobsonville section.

Sikakane, 68, is a former librarian, teacher, principal, educational inspector, author and translator of teaching texts.

Malk, 52, left South Africa 18 years ago but returned last year to support the Reconstruction and Development Program that was the centerpiece of President Nelson Mandela's historic election campaign. "I wanted to be part of the . . . new South Africa," said Malk. "So this is my contribution."

But theirs is an uphill struggle against apartheid's legacy of illiteracy. Educational spending under that system was at least four times greater per capita for white students than for blacks.

As students led boycotts and protest marches against apartheid, often under the banner of "Liberation now, education later," disruptions of schooling became the norm during the 1970s and '80s. Education fell into further chaos last year as 19 departments that oversaw funding during apartheid were scrapped and a national education department created.

The upheaval has stalled educational progress for the black majority, of whom 45 percent cannot fully read and write because they have less than four years of schooling, according to a 1994 World Bank report. In 1993, only 39 percent of black students matriculated.

So, the Imfundo-Thuto bookstore faces what Sikakane calls a "culture of non-buying of books." But the owners are optimistic they can help change that.

The shop's brightly colored exterior boasts two large lions painted above the door, and inside are book posters, educational aids, stationery, school supplies and a collection of mostly used paperback novels for young and adult readers.

Sikakane and Malk have held off stocking the shelves fully, because they want to see what their new market demands. Mandela's autobiography, Long Walk To Freedom, is much sought. Religious books are also in great demand; the Bible is a big seller. Educational books for all levels are on order by schools and individuals, such as two fifth-grade boys who wandered in and asked for a book on "how nature works" for a school science project.

Sikakane did not have any nature books on hand, but he made a note to order some. "I believe in down-up, not top-down" said Sikakane. "I'm building my books from the demands of the people."

In the Rough Seas of Government

North: 'Deceitful, mendacious and traitorous,' observed McFarlane

Rick Atkinson

THE NIGHTINGALE'S SONG
By Robert Timberg
Simon & Schuster. 543pp $27.50.

THE IRAN-CONTRA affair was not the Watergate of the 1980s, although at times the two scandals seemed similar in their brazen assault on the U.S. Constitution. The harebrained scheme to barter arms for hostages — while secretly diverting the profits to Nicaraguan rebels — lacked the soaring venality and the bathos of Watergate. More important, it lacked the tragic central character of a Richard Nixon surrounded by slimy subalterns whose morality was as suspect as their judgment.

One of the strengths of Robert Timberg's fine book is his recognition that Iran-Contra is thin ground on which to construct an epic morality play. He has kept his drama on a human scale, and The Nightingale's Song — Timberg casts Reagan as the nightingale whose song proved seductive to the book's five main characters — is the better for it.

The book revolves around five men, three of them central to the scandal, the other two decidedly peripheral. What lashes them all together is their common Alma Mater — the U.S. Naval Academy — and their common fate as young academy graduates who served the losing side in Vietnam. Timberg argues that they span a single generation, but in fact they are sufficiently far apart in age to straddle both sides of a generational faultline. John M. Poindexter and John S. McCain III, class of 1958, would become, respectively, national security advisor and a U.S. senator; Robert C. "Bud" McFarlane, class of 1959, would also serve as a national security advisor; James H. Webb III and Oliver L. North Jr., relative youngsters from the class of '68, would respectively become secretary of the Navy and, well, you know.

Timberg himself is an Annapolis graduate, class of 1964, and a Marine veteran who has been a newspaper reporter for the past quarter-century, most recently as deputy chief of the Baltimore Sun's Washington bureau. His old school ties give him an insider's vantage without rendering him an apologist either for the institution or its sons. What makes the book work is his deft storytelling skills. We are drawn into the world of these young men, and we come to care what happens to them and why they behave — or misbehave — as they do.

The most arresting figure among the quintet is perhaps the least well-known. McCain is the son and grandson of famous admirals; despite his lineage — or maybe because of it — he was something of a ne'er-do-well as a midshipman and junior officer. As a carrier pilot off the coast of Vietnam, he was a key figure in the catastrophic fire aboard the U.S.S. Forrestal that killed 134 men and nearly sank the ship in July 1967.

Worse was to come for McCain. Three months later he was shot down over North Vietnam, where he spent the next five and a half years as a prisoner of war. His defiance, grit and eventual transition from naval officer to politician are well sketched. Whatever we may think of McCain's politics, we come to like and admire him as someone who keeps getting up off the canvas, bloody but unbowed.

The five threads twist inexorably toward the public revelation of Iran-Contra in November 1986. Timberg's rendition of the basic tale is, to a large extent, culled from work already in print; he is generous with his credits, and attributes fully. What he adds to the tapestry is a richer group portrait of the protagonists, especially within the context of their Academy upbringing and military experiences.

HIS PICTURE is not revisionist. At the end of the day McFarlane is still diffident, decent, out of his depth. Poindexter is cerebral, vapid and remarkably ignorant of the American body politic. North is energetic, manipulative and, as McFarlane bluntly observes of his former protégé, "deceitful, mendacious and traitorous." (McFarlane, whose talent as a stand-up comic was rarely obvious when he was in the public eye, also describes Ronald Reagan as having "the attention span of a fruit fly.")

If not a different view, what we do gain from Timberg is a more complete perspective. Seen within the framework of their personal histories, these five men assume a three-dimensionality that makes them compelling. The larger yarn is also elevated, perhaps not to high tragedy but certainly beyond farce.

Occasionally Timberg mounts his high horse with unbecoming sanctimony. In describing North's sins, for example, he tells us, "Equally important is what he did not do. He did not gas Jews. Not even close. Anyone who does not understand the distinction is a fool." Also, his prose at times is overrun with journalistic or military clichés: Washington law firms are "high-powered," while a ship is "skippered by" a certain captain.

In the main, however, the book is solid and engrossing. Not least it makes us privy, as Timberg writes, to "secret-sharers, men whose experiences at Annapolis, during the Vietnam War and its aftermath, illuminate a generation, or a portion of a generation — those who went . . . Whatever they later became — hero, hotdog hustler, or zealot — they were for a time among the best and the brightest this nation had to offer. And in their formative years — at Annapolis and during the Vietnam era — they shared a seemingly unassailable certainty. They believed in America."

Where the Stories Sizzle

Brigitte Weeks

BEACH MUSIC
By Pat Conroy
Doubleday. 628pp. $27.50.

WHEN PAT CONROY tells readers that "no story is a straight line," he's not kidding. But whoever fell in love with a straight line? Beach Music is a chaotic, often exasperating but completely lovable novel. It will provoke more tears, more discussion and more laughter than anything else the summer of 1995 can offer.

One can envy those who come anew to this astonishing novelist. Veterans of The Great Santini, The Lords Of Discipline and The Prince Of Tides will run into familiar characters here, notably cruel and insensitive fathers, wounded yet wonderful women and above all the Low Country of South Carolina, which plays a tangible role in the plot, its smell, texture and almost pagan rituals spilling over all the pages.

But Conroy's world has widened and the light darkened in the 10 years since The Prince Of Tides. His new novel opens with a stunning portrait of Rome where, amid the piazzas and the street markets, Jack McCall, our narrator and hero, is raising his small daughter, Leah. He is trying to escape his own Southern upbringing and family and memories of his wife Shyla, whose careful suicide opens the novel.

Jack's effort to come to terms with what drove her to pay the bills, make her husband a dentist's appointment and plunge to her death from the Silas Pearlman bridge in Charleston is but one driving force in this maze of stories. Shyla McCall was Jewish, beautiful and the daughter of Holocaust survivors, who have suffered beyond description. She inherited that suffering, and no one, including her husband, could shelter her from it. Jack's search for answers takes him into the wartime Polish ghettos through the chilling stories of his bereaved parents-in-law.

On the dark side of the ledger Conroy also places the immeasurable damage that he feels the war in Vietnam did to the fabric of American life. And there is more: an airport brush with death by terrorism; betrayal by college friends at the height of the anti-war movement; torture of boyhood friend Jordan Elliott by his father, the general, a rigid military ideologue; and the death of Lucy McCall, mother to Jack and his four irresistible brothers.

This is where the lines begin to blur between despair and laughter. Lucy, a self-made Southern belle of poor and illiterate origins, has raised her boys in an abusive marriage and failed to protect them from their alcoholic father. They feel betrayed, and yet the depth of their love for her pulses through this novel. "Without question," Jack says, "Lucy was the most maddening, enthralling, contrary, and dangerous woman I have ever met."

The indomitable Lucy is dying of leukemia, and that is what brings Jack and 9-year-old Leah back to South Carolina. Her dying is a masterpiece of chaos (she is kidnapped from the hospital at one point), unbearable poignancy ("Help me with something, Jack . . . Since I've never died before, I don't know how to do it right," says she who learned how to out-South the old South), and yet exultant optimism (as her leukemia worsens, the boys throw a giant bash in her honor, and the whole town comes).

When the brothers get together

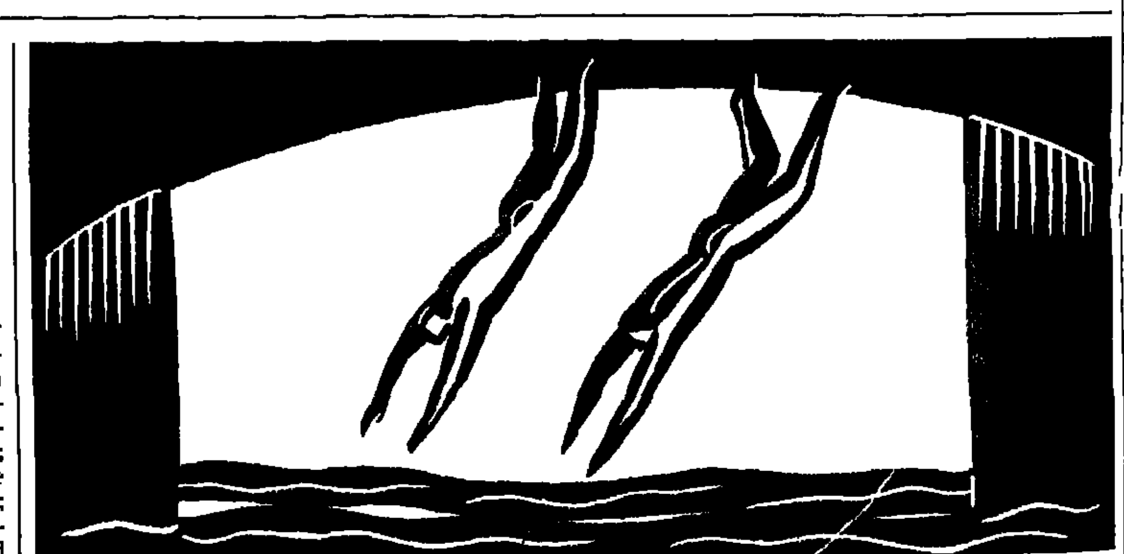


ILLUSTRATION: ANTHONY RUSSO

at times of high comedy and unbearable sorrow, the strobe lights come on. Packaged in bitter humor, brotherly repartee and over-the-edge farce, theirs must be the most powerful fraternal relationship to have surfaced in American fiction. An unparalleled mixture of unbounded high spirits, loyalty, shared pain and inarticulate affection exists among Jack, the travel and food writer; Dallas the lawyer struggling to keep a law practice afloat as his father drinks their reputation away; Tee (Tecumseh), who teaches autistic children; and Dupree, who works in a state mental hospital and sees their youngest brother, schizophrenic John Hardin, as his particular cross to bear.

Conroy is unable to resist set-pieces (would we want him to?), and when John Hardin McCall holds the only bridge to the sea islands open at gunpoint, his ransom demand is to have his four brothers jump naked into the river before the assembled gaping crowd. To avoid exposing their unstable and armed brother to Federal agents, the four McCall boys do just that. One might not want to spend too much time on a desert island with these guys, but they make for wonderful reading.

The range of passions and subjects that brings life to every page of this story is almost endless. The South and its heartbeat are epitomized by Lucy's dogged battle to save the loggerhead turtles from extinction. There is also the food. Beach Music may drive many readers to the kitchen this summer in search of the kind of alchemy Jack McCall/Pat Conroy finds there. Descriptions of meals prepared leave the reader's mouth watering. Jack not only writes about food, he creates it and enjoys it. He teaches his daughter how to cook, telling us, "When I was in the kitchen I could no longer feel the pressure of the world on my shoulders; for me cooking has always been a high form of play, and teaching someone how to make a meal memorable was a combination of thrill and gift that I never tired of giving."

At the risk of sounding ungracious, it must be said that Conroy's joy in the story sometimes leads him very far from his narrative. He demands total loyalty from his readers. They must follow wherever he chooses to lead. Some rebelled at the Bengal tiger that bounded into the middle of The Prince Of Tides, and those skeptics are going to have the same trouble with the nautical white-tailed buck which mysteriously rescues the McCall boys in deadly peril at sea. More important, though, is the fact that Conroy blew the denouement. He had a story to finish and a point to make; he is a narrative magician, but the device he chose simply doesn't work.

But Conroy tells tall tales full of laughter and real people. So much blood courses though the veins of this novel that it can afford to shed a few drops here and there. As Jack and his brothers drift naked down the river to beguile John Hardin into closing the bridge, they tell each other tales: "They were Southern boys and they knew how to make a story sizzle when it hits the fat." Rest assured that, despite a few false steps, so does Pat Conroy.

Minimum wage offers maximum returns

According to the theory of the free-market, lowering wages leads to higher employment. It doesn't. **Will Hutton** explains why

FAIRNESS has a powerful grip on the popular imagination. In vain do right-wing politicians, free-market economists and the business élite plead that the rich need and deserve incentives while the only way for the poor to price themselves into work is for there to be no potential minimum to their wages. It is seen as one law for the rich and another for the poor — and so it is.

This week the British business élite's double standards were vividly on display. On Monday the Greenbury committee reported, arguing for some minimal changes and safeguards to limit the more outrageous boardroom abuses but essentially leaving the existing structures in place. On Tuesday the Confederation of British Industry (CBI) reaffirmed its opposition to the minimum wage.

Market forces, business will claim, must do their felicitous work at each end of the income scale. If the country feels that the results leave those at the bottom too poor, then it should supplement their income with benefits for which the taxpayer foots the bill. At the top, the processes by which pay is determined should be transparent and properly taxed — but beyond that the market must rule.

In this conception the market is a somehow impersonal arbiter of economic fortunes. The great forces of power and equity that lie at the bottom of market relations, and the social and political institutions through which they are mediated, are abstracted away. It is all supposedly a matter of supply and demand. The rise in executive salaries is explained as a price signal showing that there are too few people coming forward with the ability to run British companies. So their price gets bid up.

But as Paul Ormerod argues in the Death Of Economics the notion that the pay of directors, investment bankers and the like has anything to do with supply and demand operating in a competitive labour market is palpably absurd. Tens of thousands apply to get on the management training courses of the top 100 companies or City investment banks, but still their salaries spiral upwards rather than are bid down; meanwhile, there are chronic shortages of applicants for jobs on the railways — and still Railtrack resists paying more than 3 per cent. The one thing that you can honestly say about the labour market is that it does not operate according to the laws by which British business claims that it does.

Leading theorists in economics are now challenging the simple nostrums that inform the British debate, which amount to little more than a return to the axioms of early 19th century political economy, in which the price of labour is meant to be like the price of tomatoes: lower it and more is demanded — raise it and less is sought.

Late last year, David Blanchflower and Andrew Oswald published the most rigorous cross-country survey of the labour market ever undertaken — the Wage Curve. Over four years the two used 9,000 computer hours to survey the relationship between wages and employment of 3.5 million people in 12 countries, delivering results that show that every word the CBI, the Government and the Economist magazine — the British Pravda to the Conservative élite — utter on the labour market is balderdash.

Employment is not highest where real wages are lowest, and

The results show that every word the CBI and the Government utter on the labour market is balderdash

lowest where real wages are highest. Nowhere has lowering real wages led to higher employment. Put another way, unemployment serves to lower real wages by a predictable degree — a doubling of unemployment lowers real wages by about 10 per cent everywhere — but that lowering of wages does not lead to a rise in employment.

There is no disputing the numbers; the task is to find an explanation that fits the data. The answer lies in the way wages are fixed and maintained. The dynamic component of the labour market is not the price of labour, it is the demand, and wages are fixed not in relation to what terms the unemployed might accept but an internal calculus by individual firms of the worth of their workforces. This "efficiency wage" comprises the best combination of incentives, the cost of rehiring, the value of knowing the capacity of the existing workforce and its marginal productivity — all traded off against the value of what is produced. It is a complex mix in which the level of unemployment is at best only one element, at worst peripheral.

Unemployment therefore does not lower real wages to price the unemployed into work; it acts to discipline the wages and behaviour of those who are employed. It is only if the demand for labour rises that the unemployed will find work — which is why Blanchflower and Oswald find that high employment and high wages go hand in hand, and that low wages and high unemployment are similarly correlated.

Top executives' pay is one proof of this theory; they are the beneficiaries of high demand for their services and the need to secure their loyalty to one firm — a kind of efficiency wage for senior directors. Their pay has nothing to do with the competitive interaction of supply and demand, as in a textbook free-labour market.

Another proof is new evidence from the US that a minimum wage for the low-paid is also an instrument for promoting efficiency in the labour market, and that as long as it is set at reasonable levels it promotes rather than reduces employment.

In Myth And Measurement, Professors David Card and Alan Kreuger from Princeton University show that just as in the wider labour market unemployment acts as a discipline on wage levels for those in employment rather than an active force for lowering the jobless totals, so this same process is at work at the bottom of the labour market. The difference is that here wages are so low that they create social difficulties for those earning them.

Free-market theory predicts that a minimum wage must lower employment because it raises the price of labour. In a variety of empirical tests, notably in the US fast-food industry, Card and Kreuger show the opposite is true. In a free market, firms set their wages so low that they have high turnover rates and longer periods in which they cannot find workers. Although this may appear to boost margins in the short run, the actual wage is below the efficiency wage. A minimum wage reduces turnover rates, raises skills and even increases output by having extra manpower to service customer needs. A minimum wage raises employment as long as it brings the efficiency wage and money wage into line; but if the minimum wage is set above the efficiency wage, job losses will result.

It also serves to promote social cohesion and alleviate poverty. In Britain it used to be argued that low wages were not a cause of poverty — single parenthood or bad pensions were the main reasons for low incomes. But that was before the labour market was deregulated, with the wages of the bottom 10 per cent falling in real terms since 1979. Two-fifths of the workers who would benefit from a minimum wage of £3 an hour live in the poorest 10 per cent of households.

The CBI and the Government are united in opposing a minimun wage in principle, preferring to boost the incomes of the poor through family credit. But this is no more than a contemporary version of the Speenhamland system which at the beginning of the 19th century locked the working class into appalling dependence and poverty for a generation. The idea was that the very poor were to be saved from starvation by being offered a subsistence income devised by local magistrates and funded by the ratepayer. But, just as today, the free labour market bid down wages, and the ratepayers found themselves subsidising rapacious employers. Poverty exploded, the rates became insupportable and the economy began to wind down as levels of demand fell away. It was inherently absurd.

Yet that is the path Britain is now set upon. Spending on family credit has already exceeded £2.4 billion and must increase as the processes bidding down the wages of the bottom 10 per cent extend up the income hierarchy. Essentially the taxpayer is funding cheap labour.

It is the oldest story in capitalism, and during this week's special pleading for the rich and assault on the idea of a minimum wage for the poor, no one in Britain should ever forget it.

In Brief

JAPAN'S trade surplus fell in the first six months of the year by 4 per cent, but was still a hefty $57.4 billion, the finance ministry reported. The surplus with the US rose by 2.1 per cent to a record $25.2 billion.

MADAME TUSSAUD'S plans to spend £20 million opening a wax museum in New York's Times Square, similar in size to London's top tourist attraction.

JAGUAR announced that it will invest £400 million in a new factory at Castle Bromwich, West Midlands, to make a new luxury saloon, creating more than 6,000 jobs. Ford, Jaguar's owner, will receive £80 million in aid from the Government.

EXECUTIVES of Smith New Court and its leading shareholder, N M Rothschild, were locked in talks trying to thrash out a deal for the takeover of the stockbroking house by either Commerzbank or Merrill Lynch before Thursday's AGM.

ATLANTA-BASED Southern Electric International met a storm of protest when it was accused of trying to buy South Western Electricity, a UK regional power company, on the cheap for £1 billion. It is the first unfriendly takeover bid for a UK utility by an overseas company.

CAR MAKER Adam Opel, General Motors' German subsidiary, said it had no evidence of irregularities by board members. Sixty-five Opel employees are among 244 people at 40 companies being investigated for alleged bribery and breach of trust.

VCI, the video publishing group, snapped up André Deutsch, one of the UK's last independently owned general publishers, for £500,000.

PETER SUTHERLAND, former director general of the World Trade Organisation, is to join the US investment bank Goldman Sachs as head of its international division.

ROYAL ASSENT this week for the Pensions Bill will restore pensions rights to 16,500 war widows who have been divorced, spearated or widowed for the second time, but will not benefit more recent service widows and widows who married after their husbands left the service.

AMERICAN BANKS First Chicago and NBD Bancorp agreed to merge, creating a mid-western powerhouse with $120 billion in assets.

SCOTT PAPER agreed a $6.8 billion takeover bid from Kimberley-Clark in a share swap that will create a more formidable household products competitor to Procter & Gamble.

FOREIGN EXCHANGES

	Sterling rates July 10	Sterling rates July 17
Australia	2.2195-2.2225	2.1713-2.1737
Austria	15.62-15.64	15.65-15.69
Belgium	45.64-45.69	45.71-45.81
Canada	2.1451-2.1473	2.1613-2.1644
Denmark	8.64-8.65	8.65-8.66
France	7.72-7.73	7.72-7.74
Germany	2.2216-2.2239	2.2225-2.2258
Hong Kong	12.29-12.30	12.33-12.34
Ireland	0.9742-0.9761	0.9730-0.9755
Italy	2,567-2,571	2,568-2,572
Japan	138.60-138.73	141.26-141.52
Netherlands	2.4887-2.4911	2.4904-2.4937
New Zealand	2.359-2.383	2.381-2.384
Norway	9.87-9.88	9.86-9.88
Portugal	233.87-234.24	233.29-233.92
Spain	191.85-192.14	190.61-190.89
Sweden	11.50-11.53	11.46-11.48
Switzerland	1.8450-1.8478	1.8593-1.8622
USA	1.5885-1.5895	1.5944-1.5954
ECU	1.1993-1.2010	1.3272-1.3282

FTSE100 Share index down 12.3 at 3448.6, FTSE 250 index up 19.3 at 3789.8. Gold up $2.50 at $388.50.

SENIOR INTERNATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES IN SOCIAL WELFARE

SCF works to achieve lasting benefits for children within the communities in which they live by influencing policy and practice based on its experience and study in different parts of the world. In all its work SCF endeavours to make a reality of children's rights. We are currently seeking to appoint senior social welfare advisers to the following posts:

National Social Welfare Adviser

Kampala, Uganda **£21,202**

The main focus of SCF's social work programme in Uganda is in the advice and assistance it offers the department of probation and social welfare in the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs.

As national social welfare adviser, your main tasks will be to work with the department of probation and social welfare, NGOs and other relevant agencies and government departments at the national level for the protection of children and the promotion of Children's rights in Uganda. You will also support and advise SCF Uganda projects to ensure a sense of common purpose based on the Rights of the Child in collaboration with the Social Work Training Adviser and the Rakai Project Adviser.

National Social Welfare Adviser

Maputo, Mozambique **£19,294**

In recent times SCF has provided support to the government at national level in Maputo and at provincial level in Zambezia. SCF and the Ministry of Co-ordination for Social Action (MICAS) have recently undertaken a review of their joint work in the country. The main aim of SCF/MICAS joint work will be to facilitate easier access and wider availability of appropriate social services to vulnerable groups, notably the children, women and people with disabilities. As social welfare adviser, your task will be to assist the national director of social action and SCF field director in the social sector. The focus will be on the practical well managed implementation of already developed social policy guidelines including up-grading of the technical and practical know-how of MICAS personnel, strengthening their management and planning capacity, including information management at district level and fostering inter-sectoral collaboration between MICAS, other government agencies and relevant donor/NGOs.

For both posts

Essential requirements include a social work qualification, managerial and training skills, knowledge of childcare issues, skills in policy development and implementation, information management, excellent interpersonal skills. **Additional requirement for Mozambique post:** ability to communicate effectively in Portuguese (training provided).

Both posts have accompanied status and are offered on a 25 months contract. Salaries should be tax free (subject to normal requirements). You can also expect a generous benefits package including accommodation, flights and other living expenses.

For further details and an application form, please write with cv to Jenny Thomas, Overseas Personnel Administrator, SCF, 17 Grove Lane, London SE5 8RD. Fax 0171 793 7610.

Closing date 14 August 1995.

Save the Children

■ Working for a better world for children

THE AFRICAN WILDLIFE FOUNDATION
is recruiting a
SPECIES AND ECOSYSTEM PROGRAM COORDINATOR

The African Wildlife Foundation (AWF) is a non-profit organization working with African governments and NGOs to conserve natural resources, especially wildlife. AWF currently has a vacancy for the post of Species and Ecosystem Program Coordinator which will be based in Nairobi, Kenya.

The main purpose of the job is to develop the AWF 'Species and Ecosystem Program' and provide effective coordination and technical direction, management and fundraising. Whilst the program will include many research activities this post is not a research post.

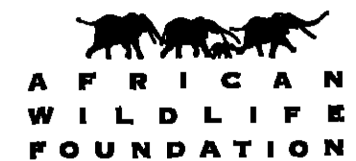
Responsibilities include:

- Develop the goals, objectives and a strategic plan for the program in collaboration with AWF staff and colleagues in our African partner organizations.
- As the coordinator of a diverse team of individuals, work to establish an innovative set of activities with strong theoretical basis of conservation biology.
- Develop the program to promote coherent species and ecosystem- related research and conservation actions around Africa and to build the capacity of African institutions in the process.
- Work with the AWF Development Department to identify funding sources and develop proposals for fundraising purposes.

The ideal candidate will hold a higher degree in natural sciences or related conservation field and will have at least seven years professional experience in wildlife conservation, preferably in Africa. The candidate must have proven project management capacity, fundraising experience, an ability to communicate orally and in writing. A competitive salary commensurate with experience will be offered.

Before applying for the job, applicants should request a copy of the job description for this post. The closing date for applications is 31 August 1995.

Please contact:
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African Wildlife Foundation
P O Box 48177, NAIROBI, Kenya
Tel: + 254 2 710367



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* Development and implementation of communication strategies to promote safe sex and condom use among Nigerian youth.
* Identification of provider training needs.
* Identification and management of short term consultancy inputs.
* The design and implementation of surveys to evaluate the effectiveness of advertising and health promotion campaigns.

Can you demonstrate:

* Marketing and communication skills, including market research, mass-media campaign development, and promotional campaign development.
* A minimun of three years experience of working in a developing country, preferably Africa, some of which should be in a management capacity.
* Strong interpersonal skills and the ability to motivate and manage a team.
* A degree level qualification in marketing or communications (is desirable).

Contract period: 2 years initially with possible extension to 3 years.

Salary: £30,000 per annum plus benefits, including housing.

If you feel you have the right blend of skills, experience and enthusiasm please write your CV and covering letter stating why you are applying to Jim Myers, Marie Stopes International, 62 Grafton Way, London W1P 5LD, UK.

The closing date is 31 July, 1995.



Deputy Regional Representative, Caribbean

Based in Santo Domingo, Contract: 2 years (renewable)

The regional coordination of OXFAM UK/I's staff and programme in the Caribbean is based in Santo Domingo. The Deputy Regional Representative (DRR) will assist in the management planning, implementation, development and evaluation of OXFAM UK/I's programme and staff in the Caribbean, along with developing appropriate strategies for emergencies and disaster preparedness work.

S/he will deputise for the Regional Representative in her/his absence. Responsibilities of this post will include supervision of Programme Coordinators and of the Regional Office Manager. The postholder will have:

- at least four years experience of development work with community organisations and NGO's (preferably in the Caribbean).
- a high level of analysis and strategic thinking, including knowledge of planning methodology and management techniques.
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Please quote ref: OS/DRR/CAR/PY/GW.
Closing Date: 18 August 1995.
Interviews: 7/8 September 1995.

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Closing date: 1 September 1995.

Date of assumption of duties: 1 January 1996.

Contact persons: Ms D Nashandih-Endjambi at (061) 207-2295 or Mr I Nawaseb at (061) 207-2002.

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Application procedure: Applications in writing accompanied by a curriculum vitae, giving full details of present salary notch, increment date, the earliest available date which duty can be assumed and including three references should be submitted to: The Head, Recruitment and Selection, University of Namibia, Private Bag 13301, Windhoek, Namibia. Preliminary telegraphic applications may be made via telex 56-727 or fax (061) 207-2105/207-2444.

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Sultan Qaboos University - Sultanate of Oman

Department of Mathematics and Statistics, College of Science

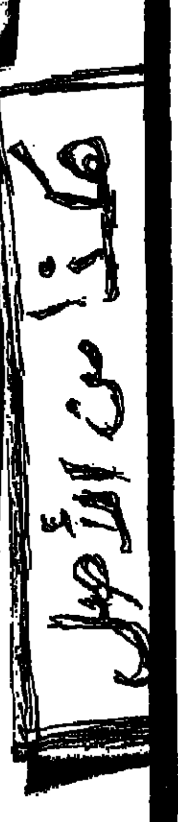
Sultan Qaboos University, the National University of the Sultanate of Oman, urgently invites applications for the Department of Mathematics and Statistics in the Fields of Mathematics (Applied and Pure) and Statistics. Appointments are expected to start in September 1996. At present vacancies exist for lecturers (with Ph.d. a minimum requirement) and Assistant Professors (with a minimum of four years post-Ph.D. teaching experience). Preference will be given to applicants conducting research in the modelling of geophysical and environmental problems, but applications in other fields may also be considered.

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The Guardian Weekly



Face of revolution . . . one of the 7,000 people at the Marxism 95 conference PHOTOGRAPH: GARRY WEASER

Full Marx for socialist forum

Lawrence Donegan

"**OVER** the last few days, I've been to lectures on the American civil war, the Communist Party and blacks in the 1930s, and why there is no Labour Party in America — they've all been amazing," said Mary Ryan.

The 24-year-old actress was not alone in her appetite for knowledge. She was one of 7,000 people who registered for last week's Marxism 95 conference in London.

Tony Blair, in his lecture on the 1945 Attlee government the week before, stressed the importance of social and economic history. After years in the doldrums, political education is clearly back in vogue.

Despite its leader's exhortations, the Labour party is not at the forefront of this revival. Marxism 95 is a Socialist Workers Party production.

The event is modelled on the Communist University of London, a political education forum that attracted up to 10,000 people in the late 1970s.

The programme had its fair share of standard SWP fare. But the week-long event was far from pure propaganda, and covered everything from "John Milton, Andrew Marvell and the English Revolution" to "Frank Zappa (Hollywood Contradictions)".

Notes & Queries Joseph Harker

THERE ARE quite a number of six-letter words in which the letters are in alphabetical order, eg, abbess and knotty, but are there any longer ones?

THERE ARE seven-letter words with the letters in reverse alphabetical order: sponged, trolled, sniffed, spoofed, spooked, spooled, wronged. — *Erik Corry, Freiburg, Germany*

"*BILLOWY*" has seven letters in alphabetical order. I learnt this from Arthur Mee's Children's Encyclopaedia, 35 years ago. — *Robert Love, Auckland, New Zealand*

FINALLY I have a chance to use this tit-bit taught to me by my mother. The word "facetious" has all the vowels in the alphabet in the order in which they appear. — *Kate Parson Seely, Kitchener, Ontario, Canada*

WHAT IS the origin of the phrase "to paint the town red"?

IT RELATES to an outbreak of yuppie hooliganism in the early 19th century. While rampaging around Melton Mowbray in Leicestershire after nightfall, drunken Regency bucks are supposed to have stood on each other's shoulders and liberally spread red paint up many walls. The story was confirmed some years ago when traces of red were found during restoration of old buildings in the market square. — *Richard Crockett, Galashiels, Selkirkshire*

WHAT IS the difference between a rule and a regulation? If none, why do people refer to "rules and regulations"?

A RULE states what one must, must not, may, or may not do. A regulation dictates how one should do it. For example, it is a rule that one must wear a school uniform; regulations state what sort of uniform is to be worn. — *Stephen Nichols, Surbiton, Surrey*

RULES are made to be broken, regulations are written to be ignored. — *Steve Roberts, Essex Junction, Vermont, USA*

WHEN aircraft land or take off at night, cabin lights are dimmed "for safety reasons". How does this make it safer?

TO PRESERVE the night vision of the cabin crew and passengers, because the lights are liable to fail if there is an accident. It also helps to ensure that the emergency lighting floor strips, which indicate the route to the exits, are more readily visible. — *(Dr) R V Smith, Church Crookham, Hants*

WAS THERE a single currency in Europe during the Roman empire?

IN THE western part of the empire only Roman coinage was available from the reign of Claudius (41-54 AD) onwards. In the east, many local communities continued to issue their own base metal currency and even some silver coinage. Roman precious metal currency (gold and silver) did circulate in the eastern provinces, but not Roman base metal currency.

Around 270 AD, following the collapse of all eastern local currencies, Roman currency became the only one in use in the Balkans, Greece and most of the north-east. Egypt, however, continued to strike local coinage for a further two decades. From this period onwards a unified (single) Roman currency circulated throughout the entire Roman empire. — *Constantine Lagos, Dept of Archaeology, University of Durham*

Any answers?

WHY IS cruelty not one of the seven deadly sins? — *Sheila Dorrell, London*

DOES rubbing dock leaves really alleviate nettle stings? If so, how? — *Michael Miller, Sheffield*

WHAT WOULD be a good argument to show that rationality is a flawed concept? — *Nathalie Pernstich, London*

IF Pontius Pilate had released Jesus . . . what then? — *G Toon, Newcastle under Lyme*

WHAT WOULD be a really good riposte to morons who shout: "Cheer up, love, it may never happen"? — *Susan Kelly, London*

ON WHAT grounds was Hitler a vegetarian? — *D Hunter, Lincoln*

Answers should be e-mailed to weekly@guardian.co.uk, faxed to 0171/44171-242-0985, or posted to The Guardian Weekly, 75 Farringdon Road, London EC1M 3HQ

Letter from Tanzania Lewis Lama

Masai messages

"**TWO TENTS** were washed away at Kikoti this morning in the heavy rain." Interesting. Kikoti is a safari camp 40km to the west through trackless bush. "How was your trip to Dar es Salaam? You were there on Tuesday last week, no?" I hadn't told anyone from the village that I was going to Dar last week.

There are no telephones in Loiborsoit, a Masai village in northern Tanzania. The two-way radio owned by the missionaries is not available to village members. There are two roads to Arusha. One is closed during the rains and the other is 121km of dusty, corrugated track through rivers and bush and plagued by bandits during the Christmas and Easter seasons. If one wants to travel to another rural village the roads are infinitely more difficult and much less likely to be used by buses or trucks that might offer a lift. In short, communications in this part of Masailand are difficult.

So how come the village is the hub of an information network stretching from Dar es Salaam to Sweden? There is a Swedish man here married to a Masai woman. He lives in Sweden part of the year and in Loiborsoit for the rest. His letters come to the village intermittently and when they do they are filled with news everyone already knows.

The Ethiopian cement seller in Arusha gives me the latest dope on who is coming in from Europe to manage which project. I can walk away knowing the colour and make of the car they will be driving and probably their salary too.

Closer to home, the village chairman has been forced to find work in the gemstone mines in Mehrerani. If I were asked to get a message to someone in Mehrerani, outside of the village communication network, I would be defeated. Yet, whenever there is to be a village meeting on any important issue the chairman arrives in time to lobby, bully, charm and persuade, in order to keep local politics moving along in what he considers to be the right direction.

He arrives from the distant town ready to deal with all the issues that arise when one has five wives, countless children and 150 head of cows and goats. He steps down from the pick-up or tractor that has carried him the last 27km knowing the minutest details of the problems and good fortune of his household.

Pastoralists in Masailand depend on mobility and good information networks to succeed in an extremely variable climate and landscape. While one area has plentiful rain and good grass, another is bone-dry or perhaps infested with tsetse flies or ticks that will decimate herds. To maximise herd productivity it is important that the leaders know which areas to move to and which areas to avoid. No Masai walks past another herder without asking where they are coming from, where they are going, and what the news is.

As the range around them shrinks, their options are reduced in terms of available pasture, but the opportunities to trade or work are growing, and these are the new items of interest to the modern herder. National parks, bean, maize and flower farms, and the drought have limited their mobility, just as economic development and aid projects have created new openings. The communication network remains in place so that the Masai can take advantage of these new opportunities.

This year the rains have been good. Today the village centre is empty. The young men are out ploughing with their teams of cows, or watching over herds in the near pastures, or chasing down jobs or trading.

WHAT'S the news? There is a new mission being built 47km away. The new snake park on the main road between Arusha and Dodoma needs a young Masai who speaks English. The word goes out and suddenly a prospective *morani* appears looking for a lift. Rodalite has been discovered 12km to the south. Some will go to dig, others to sell food and water to the diggers, others to bring food and water to their brothers who are digging there.

To many outsiders Masailand presents a bleak face, dry, dusty and filled with people who don't seem to have enough to eat. They carry water and firewood for long distances each day, and send their young children out in the early hours to watch over the calves and sheep and goats.

The other side of this picture is a land filled with people who are willing to try new ideas to feed their families in a changing world. They use the tools at their disposal, and the most important one so far is an information highway that is much more reliable and efficient than the electronic mail node out of Arusha. We live in hope.

A Country Diary

Richard Mabey

LONDON: Climbing the temperature gradients on the 25-mile train trip to London makes you aware of how much hotter cities are than even close-lying countryside, and what a difference this makes to flowering times. At home in the Chilterns, the buddleia spikes are still in tight bud. At Watford, the first hints of purple are showing, and, in the grimy cuttings outside Euston, they are already in full flower. What a blessing that this introduction from China has proved such an opportunist.

The "butterfly-bush" was discovered in the mountains near the Tibetan-Chinese border in 1869 by the French missionary Père David, and arrived in this country some 30 years later.

It rapidly began to colonise waste places and, like many species from exotic stony places, found the ballast along the railway lines an especially congenial habitat. The suction of passing trains no doubt helped speed the winged seeds along. From its strongholds on the embankments it spread to car parks, building sites, and walls, sometimes even being blown upwards to take root in chimneys.

Harbour pilgrimage

TELEVISION
Nancy Banks-Smith

MARELLE PEREIRA, the daughter of the Greenpeace photographer killed when French secret agents blew up the Rainbow Warrior in New Zealand, made a filial pilgrimage in *Witness: Beyond The Rainbow* (Channel 4). It was a documentary which might have had only a fading poignancy if, a decade later to the day, they hadn't damn well done it again. This brought the whole subject thrashing noisily to the surface again like a shark on a 10-year-long fishing line.

Marelle is only 18 and still has bright flakes of childhood clinging about her. She is direct, honest, moved to tears by kindness and unkindness. Her father's memory opened doors everywhere except France.

David Lange was prime minister of New Zealand at the time of her father's death. His trousers are big and baggy, his office small and shabby. You warm to the man at once.

The French agents who pleaded guilty to manslaughter were imprisoned on a French protectorate. "Why didn't they serve their sentence in New Zealand?" asked Marelle. "You come all this way to hit me?" said Lange ruefully. "France put all sorts of pressure on. The French are very single-minded when they are pursuing their own interests. They said 'Right, we're going to make sure you don't get any dairy products or lamb into the Common Market'."

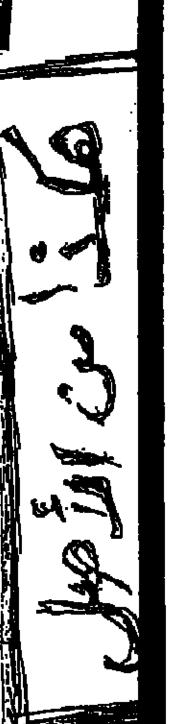
"You mean the French blackmailed you?" "Yes. A lot of farmers in New Zealand wanted us to gift-wrap them and send them back because they didn't want any threat to their butter or lamb. We said 'No'. And we tried a civilised response, keeping them under some form of detention." Within three years they were free in France.

The prime minister of France rang him and said, "I'm very sorry, David, I can't send them back. The military won't let me. I'm only the prime minister." Lange replied: "I understand. I'm only the prime minister."

In France, no one connected with the case would talk to Marelle. Dumas, the then foreign minister, rang briefly. She said, "I said 'Bye-bye' but he had already hanged up." Distressed, her English fractures.

If one thing seems sadder than another, it is what a lousy last night the sociable Fernando Pereira had on this earth. After the hoop-la of the Rainbow Warrior's arrival in Auckland, he and a British member of the crew, Dave Edwards, went ashore. It was a Tuesday night in winter. A letter had fallen off the sign Marsden Wh rf. Auckland is not a city that never sleeps.

Dave said, "I knew a few places round Auckland and so we proceeded to visit them. It didn't go that well. So then we arrived back on the Rainbow Warrior around 11 o'clockish." That must be when Auckland closes down. If they had had a better time, they would not have been on the boat when she blew up at midnight.





Foes united . . . Tommy Lee Jones and Jim Carrey in Batman Forever

Sound and fury, signifying little

CINEMA
Derek Malcolm

IF SHEER noise — thunder rather than blood — were the key to success, Joel Schumacher's **Batman Forever** would be a self-evident hit. Which, of course, it is. But can it be just for that reason? It is difficult to find another very convincing explanation. This is the kind of extravagant epic that passes from memory almost as soon as you've seen it.

The film is short on plot, none too characterful in its playing (with one notable exception) and, since it's the third time round the course, looks as if it is straining for effect. It may be the picture everyone wants to see, but beware of expecting too much. It hasn't the first edition's absurd conviction nor the second's darkly ironic imagination. It just shouts.

The design is voluptuous enough, with huge sets dominating the players, and Gotham City, when it is not being blown up, looking as grim as ever and even more futuristic than it was in Tim Burton's second film. But if there is a lot to look at, there is very little to hold in the mind's eye. It's a crash, bang, wallop of a movie whose noise in the end signifies very little.

The only performance is that of Jim Carrey as The Riddler, an overlooked employee of Wayne Enterprises who seeks vengeance with a steely, madcap enterprise of his own. It may be a kind of repeat of what he did in The Mask but it is expertly timed, garishly imagined and, were this a silent film (God willing), would still stand out as pretty good mime. The man's a star. Let there be no doubt about that.

Contrast this with Tommy Lee Jones as the equally crazed Two-Face, the other villain, who used to be a district attorney but got disfigured and unhinged by the Mafia, and you will see what I mean. Poor Tommy, equipped with a face that has been half obscured by the make-up department, screams and giggles his way to inevitable perdition as if he can't get through it quickly enough. Seldom has such a good actor been able to make so little of himself or his surprisingly silly lines.

Val Kilmer and Nicole Kidman are the goodies this time, aided and abetted by Chris O'Donnell's daredevil young Robin. Kilmer makes an able, steady-as-she-goes Batman, a Dark Knight who is very much the gentleman, playing shy emotional games with Kidman's criminal shrink. She takes an age to realise that the nice young businessman she fancies is, in fact, the caped crusader and seems a little wan compared with Michelle Pfeiffer's Catwoman. But who wouldn't?

The whole thing seems to rely chiefly on John Dykstra's special effects, which are as often as not employed in demolishing production designer Barbara Ling's slightly outré sets. There is hardly a moment of quiet in the picture. But nobody could accuse it of lacking hustle and bustle. Schumacher's energy is everywhere apparent.

This makes for a film which will have just enough familiarity to content most fans. What's lacking is a coherent personality of its own.

AN UNCLE VANYA set on a sheep station in Australia? Surely some mistake. But, in the hands of Michael Blakemore, the play as film makes sense both in and out of the setting. Country Life, "suggested by Uncle Vanya", would not have Chekhov swivelling wrathfully in his grave.

The period is just after the first world war and the quiet desperation of the inhabitants of an old house near Canterbury is made more palpable by the introduction of Alexander (Blakemore himself), who had left for London 22 years ago to make his name as a theatre critic, has been rudely sacked and now returns with his beautiful but unsettled wife (Greta Scacchi). He is full of pompous platitudes and hypochrondriac uncertainties.

His brother-in-law Jack drinks too much but is sober enough to recognise that Alexander's wife is not exactly glowing with sated desire. He wants her for himself, as does the local doctor (Sam Neill), a liberal who believes in progressive farming and Aboriginal rights.

To add to these complications, Jack's daughter (Kerry Fox) also has the hots for the good doctor, who hardly notices her. An emotional explosion soon occurs, relieved only when Alexander decides to sell the house and leave. The film, like Uncle Vanya, has universal themes, but Blakemore attempts to be more specific about colonial relationships. It's the kind of piece that relies first and foremost on atmosphere and performances.

If the film doesn't quite make it on all levels, it has distinctly more depth than John Duigan's pleasant but lightweight Sirens, although less panache and dramatic grip than Jane Campion's The Piano.

What one can certainly say about it is that, even if Chekhov is totally cast aside, Country Life remains watchable in its own right. It's a period piece that isn't concerned so much about being elegant and nostalgic as being reasonably truthful to its time.

Like an old Rolling Stone

ROCK
Caroline Sullivan

MICK IS a grandfather twice over. Keith looks more like the portrait in Dorian Gray's attic every year. Ron, baby of the band, is 48. And Charlie is, well, Charlie. Ladies and gentlemen: the Rolling Stones at 33.

That they still practise rock 'n' roll is cause for increasing amazement. Like the dog who walks on his hind legs, it's not how well they do it, but that they do it at all. Now a byword for longevity as once they were for the cutting edge of youth, they excite mingled scorn and awe with their senior status.

As they began the British leg of their world tour, in Sheffield last week, it was excusable that the road dust of 11 months was showing. Jagger, 51 and too thin in a shiny gold jacket, had the weary eyes of a man who has seen too many stadiums lately. Nevertheless, he was as lithe as a boy (possibly he, not Michael Jackson, sleeps in that oxygen tent), bouncing about on a stage built like a giant rearing metal cobra (Jagger's and Watts's idea).

Entering to a fug of pyrotechnics and hellish red smoke, the quartet plus Bill Wyman replacement Darryl Jones basked for a moment in the fans' ardour. Jones, please note, is black — the first black Stone in their three decades of profiting from black culture.

They knocked off a quick Not Fade Away, Tumbling Dice, and an anonymous-sounding number from the actually-very-good current album, Voodoo Lounge. Then it was Satisfaction, the one that prompted Jagger's famous 1960s remark about not wanting to still be singing it at 45.

Agreeable though all this was, it was rarely more than rigorously professional. It took a duet with backing singer Lisa Fischer on Gimme Shelter to raise things to a steamier pitch. As Jagger sang into her face from inches away it was easy to imagine what a fetching young thing he must have once been. But he blew it by slobbering on her bosom and reverted to Mick Jagger, Ye Olde Rock Star.

By coincidence, Marianne Faithfull, a popster who actually deserves the prefix "legendary", came out of her Irish retreat to give a concert at the Shepherd's Bush Empire to tout her new album.

The short, black-draped chanteuse has certainly lived since her days as the quintessential dolly bird. She looks every day of her 48 years, and has the voice to match. However, experience has bestowed what youth and beauty didn't — a personality. Though hair-flickingly apprehensive as she began her first London show in five years, she gained control almost instantly.

Imperiously instructing her five-piece band, she set about The Wedding from the excellent A Secret Life album. It took a few songs to get a grasp of what she was doing. Much of the material concerned the dissatisfied married woman lamenting her lot. In 1979's Ballad of Lucy Jordan the protagonist commits suicide; on the new LP's Love in the Afternoon, she has an affair. None of the songs turns out happily, and Faithfull's vulnerable air invited you to assume she was singing about herself.

Actress to the last, she was playing a character. She sang torchily, pulling out most of the stops, and was brilliant. Dragging her lower register along the ancient blues ballad Trouble in Mind, she was an archetype hitherto neglected by English pop; the upper-class woman of a certain age. (Uniquely among better-bred pop stars, Faithfull doesn't trouble to conceal her convent school accent.)

The show-stopper was Why'd Ya Do It? The centre piece of the 1979 Broken English album, it's a definitive jealousy number studded with vicious swearing.

It was such a good show that one is tempted to let her backing band off lightly. But no. The hairy quintet could hardly contain their desire to play loud rock on songs begging for sultry blues. Was Ms Faithfull, who called them "wondrous", getting ideas below her station?

A range of loners

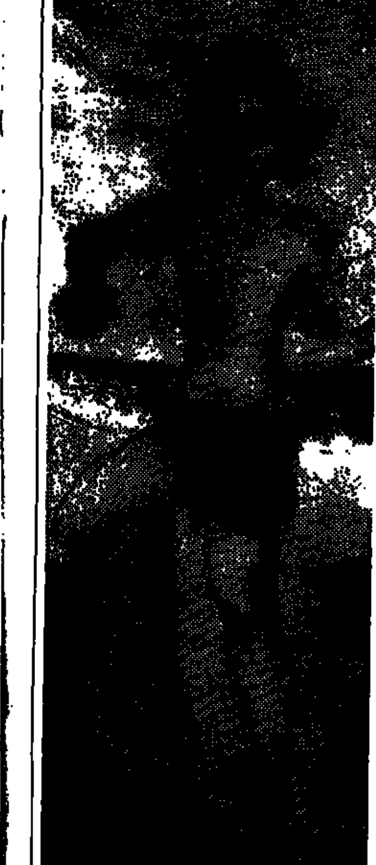
ART
Rachel Barnes

IT WAS R B Kitaj who, in his romantic way, first dreamed up the "School of London" back in 1976 for his Human Clay show at London's Tate Gallery. The idea of grouping together his "herd of differing loners" reflected his paradoxical state of wanting to belong and wanting to be other.

The artists he chose are most united by their fierce individualism and total lack of interest in belonging to any cohesive movement. Francis Bacon, Lucian Freud, Frank Auerbach, Leon Kossoff, Michael Andrews, and Kitaj himself; all are known for their hermetic, independent lives and their professional reserve. Each epitomises the Romantic concept of artist as outsider, inclined to melancholy and eccentric behaviour; society's natural critic and harbinger of change.

All have consistently kept the press at arm's length. Who can blame them for that? When Kitaj was encouraged to break his habitual reserve and go public for his retrospective at the Tate last summer, the British press responded with an unprecedented and, in some instances, libellous savaging.

What, if anything, is the common bond between these painters? Does a London School exist outside Kitaj's imagination? This immensely rich and stimulating show explores both connections and differences.



With the possible exception of Auerbach and Kossoff, there is little visual similarity between their work. Yet all have pursued a commitment to the human form — "the most basic art idea from which so much great art has come," as Kitaj puts it.

All six believe that anything worth saying can be said in paint and all have shown a mutual passion and dialogue with the old masters. "From Giotto to now — it's only one school of art," says Auerbach. Uneasy friendships also unite these artists. The notoriously acerbic Bacon fell out with almost everyone eventually, and Freud has always kept his distance. But most of them have sat for each other (Kitaj is currently posing for Freud), bought from each other and frequently admired each other. All five were invited to attend the opening of this show. They thought about it, but typically failed to turn up, reluctant to leave their work.

Fortunately the curators have gone for a mixed hang, avoiding pointlessly turning this show into six mini retros. It is the surprising comparisons and contradictions which create the tension. Late Bacon hung with Kitaj, for example, is a revelation. Without wishing to get too much into league tables, whilst Kitaj appears quirky and intriguing, Bacon emerges quite simply as the most extraordinary genius with paint this century has seen. Being hung with Bacon would do no one any favours.

"Why, after the great masters, do people ever try to do anything again," Bacon, who was inspired by Cimabue, Velazquez and Van Gogh, once asked. It was as well for us that he persevered, despite his habitual destruction of his own work. In Portrait Of A Man Walking Down Steps, based on a battered photograph of his lover George Dyer, his "waiting for the right accident" philosophy resulted in one of this century's masterpieces.

The hopeless, existential isolation of Bacon's protagonists is the strongest bond with his great rival, Freud, although their means of achieving it differs vastly. The frequently espoused theory that the profoundly disturbing effect of Bacon's paintings is unrelated to the times he lived as always rings hollow. The distorted violence and "exhilarated despair" he spoke of in The Oresteia Of Aeschylus triptych could only be a painting made in our age, inspired by its universal calamities.

Frank Auerbach has never gone for the anti-biographical stance. As a survivor of the Holocaust, in which his entire family died, he speaks of his compulsive engagement with his art as a means of combating despair. But unlike Bacon his paintings are not about despair. The thick, luscious application of layer upon layer of pigment makes Auerbach's paintings more like living organisms than pictures. The battle is hard-won, though. This agonising and perfectionism is another common bond within the group. A hundred scrapings might precede Auerbach finishing a work. Even then he has been known to recall works after selling them in order to start again.

London calling . . . Bacon's Portrait Of A Man Walking Down Steps and, left, Kitaj's Bather (Psychotic Boy)

THE wonderful Portrait Of EOW recalls De Kooning's remark that oil paint was made to convey flesh, and Auerbach's relationship with Leon Kossoff is also explored here. Apart from their mutual addiction to heavy impasto, begun as friends at St Martin's, the frequent comparisons appear much exaggerated. Kossoff's "Chaim" portraits are evocative and the fantastical perspective in his recent Christchurch, Spitalfields is a potent example of his "elated melancholy". But Kossoff does not emerge here as powerfully as Auerbach.

This show is so rich in ideas and associations that one visit, and indeed one review, is scarcely sufficient. The least-known fringe figure within this group, Michael Andrews, contributes his landscape of this year, Estuary — a beautiful, poetic, dream-like thing, at odds with the focus on the human form.

The undisputed champion of the latter has got to be Freud. What is it about his work which is so completely mesmerising, even in such good company? From his earliest flirtation with surrealism — Quince On A Blue Table (1943-44), to his recent, hitherto unseen Girl In The Attic Doorway, he never seems to put a foot wrong. But it is not just about his incomparable mastery of paint — "I want the paint to act as flesh," he has said. It is the psychological intensity; his ability, like his grandfather, to get inside the heads of his sitters, which makes his work so compelling.

The repeated criticism that his portraits are clinical and lack humanity is contradicted in the forlorn tenderness of his male lovers, the poignant vulnerability of his father and daughter and the introspective reverie of this last portrait.

These painters have remained consistently aloof from the dictates of fashion. Their independence has served them well. Each continues to produce great paintings. The current avant-garde favour video, performance and installation, often rejecting traditional methods and subjects, in particular the use of paint. But, here, paint rules. All these artists love the stuff, are exhilarated by it, and have endlessly explored its potential. This show is a celebration and reaffirmation of the power, versatility and directness of paint.

From London: Bacon, Freud, Kossoff, Andrews, Auerbach and Kitaj at the Scottish National Gallery of Modern Art until September 5

Hirst tipped for Turner Prize

Mike Ellison

DAMIEN HIRST, whose latest work was devised in an ashtray in a Chelsea pub, last week became the hottest favourite in years for the £20,000 Turner Prize, Britain's highest-profile art award.

Thirty-year-old Hirst, whose manipulation of dots, sharks and sheep put him in the vanguard of the new London art movement, was one of four artists nominated.

Even money favourite for the prize according to the bookmakers William Hill, Hirst is listed with Mark Wallinger (2-1), Mona Hatoum (4-1) and Callum Innes (5-1). The prize will be awarded in November.

Hirst was shortlisted three years ago for the prize, which goes to an artist under 50 who is judged to have produced the year's outstanding work. Then it was a rotting cow's head which drew the judges' attention.

This time it is Some Went Mad, Some Ran Away, an exhibition at the Serpentine Gallery, in London's Hyde Park, which crossed over from the art world to the big wide world when a disgruntled artist dropped black ink into Hirst's Away From The Flock, a sheep preserved in formaldehyde.

"I'm surprised, because I didn't think I'd done anything this year," said Hirst after the shortlist was announced. He dreamed up the ashtray art last month. He picked out the ends of the cigarettes he had smoked during a pub session and signed and numbered each one to create a limited edition of 25.

George Loudon, the judge representing the Tate Gallery's patrons of new art, said: "There is always a certain amount of controversy about his work, which makes it difficult for some people to take him seriously. But we do take him seriously and a lot of other people do."

The pride of St Petersburg

BALLET
Judith Mackrell

DURING the past few years, the Kirov has seemed to survive as an icon of unchanging purity even while the rest of Russia freefalls into chaos. The image of its white-tutued dancers tracing patterns of sublime beauty on stages drenched by artificial moonlight has remained potently intact — despite the reality of grinding world tours and poverty-line salaries.

But this year violence has struck at its heart. Its director, Oleg Vinogradov, has recently revealed he has been the victim of several muggings in St Petersburg, one of which proved almost fatal. He has allowed western journalists to infer that the Russian mafia are involved but he is hazy about motives. It may be money, revenge (over various sackings) or a coup to oust him. At any rate he spends half his salary on a bodyguard and walks in fear of his life.

Vinogradov has indicated he may never return to St Petersburg — which threatens the whole company's stability. Two deputies have been appointed to help run the Kirov — its flamboyant star Farouk Ruzimatov and his fellow dancer Makharbek Vaziev.

But although Vinogradov claims standards have never been stricter, dancers like the great ballerina Altynai Asylmuratova have voiced devastating criticisms of the new regime. The future looks uncertain.

Luckily for London, though, the company's reputation as one of the world's finest classical ensembles cannot be dismantled overnight. The Kirov still knows how to put on a great show and there are few better than its opulent production of La Bayadere, which last week opened its five-week season at the London Coliseum.

In its restoration of the ballet's 19th century staging, in its high classical mime and grand style, you can feel yourself travelling back to Tsarist Russia as you watch.

Yulia Makhalina as the betrayed temple dancer Nikiya looks perfect for the ballet's ersatz orientalisms, her eerily supple limbs coiling around the serpentine curves of the choreography.

Disappointingly, though, the extreme tension of her style does not resonate with pathos nor yield to the tenderness necessary to register Nikiya's tragedy. She also appears too invulnerable to the machinations of her rival Gamzatti, while Tatiana Amosova, despite having a huge kick in her arabesque and a formidable turn, does not put out enough arrogance to tip the balance of power between them.

Farouk Ruzimatov as the wavering lover Solor, however, makes a perfect match for Makhalina with his exotic glamour, and fluid body. Last season Ruzimatov's style disappeared into a wild parody of itself — but the extreme mannerisms are in check and his line looks as beautiful as it did when London first fell in love with him.

Our love affair with the Kirov's corps de ballet is also still going strong. In Act III the sight of its 32 dancers moving in calm unison, breathing like one dancer, their rarified limbs curving like one body, remains one of the seven wonders of the ballet world.

Cool summer of contempt

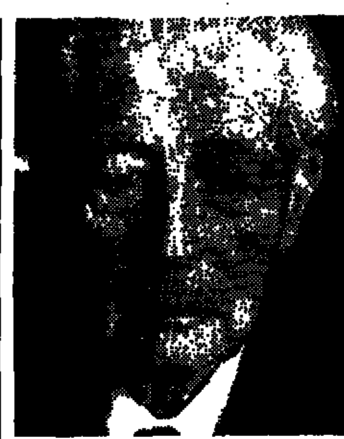
Martin Walker

The Macmillan Years: The Emerging Truth
by Richard Lamb
John Murray 545pp £25

A BRITISH prime minister of international reputation resigns. Against the odds, the new prime minister, catapulted into Downing Street after a vicious leadership battle, manages to win re-election. He struggles through a crisis over Britain's role in Europe, a series of rows with the American allies, economic slumps and sporadic party revolts, and heads for a new election against a rejuvenated Labour Party as sleaze and ominous official inquiries pile upon him.

The parallels between John Major and Harold Macmillan were always intriguing, in spite of the legend of leisurely competence and unflappable vision Macmillan managed to concoct in his own memoirs and in the approved biography by Alistair Horne. But the delvings by Richard Lamb into the cabinet papers, newly opened under the 30-year rule, make the parallels compelling.

It is now plain, despite official denials, that Macmillan sought to interfere with the course of justice in the Profumo affair by trying to get the police to delay the arrest of Stephen Ward on charges of living off immoral earnings. Selling arms to Iraq may lack the spice of a Soviet naval attaché and a British minister for war sharing the favours of a tart. But the squalid evasions of the Mac-



Macmillan: 'mortally wounded' by ministerial scandal

millan and Major governments, faced with such scandals, have a great deal in common.

So do their foreign policies. Official legend has it that Anglo-American relations were rarely better than when Macmillan patched up the rows over Suez with President Eisenhower, his old wartime comrade-in-arms, then played the fatherly role to a grateful John Kennedy. The cabinet papers belie the claim. There were bitter disputes over US insistence on being able to fire Polaris missiles almost as soon as they left the quayside at Holy Loch, whatever the British government might splutter about the need for London's consent. There were rows about the Middle East, Laos and US threats to use nuclear weapons against China.

The supposed high summer of the special relationship was so cool that on the eve of the Cuban missile crisis, Macmillan doubted whether it meant anything at all, and sent the Foreign Office a questionnaire, asking them to define it. It certainly did not include, as the FO tried to suggest, an automatic consultation in the event of a crisis. There was nothing "special" about the way Kennedy waited a full week after learning of the presence of Soviet missiles in Cuba before informing the British. By that time, American policy had been set.

The Americans had only contempt for the way Macmillan tried to use them for his electoral advantage. He brought Eisenhower to London on the eve of the 1959 election, and invited Kennedy to stay at his private country home, Birch Grove, in 1963. The Americans ignored Macmillan's grandiose agenda for world statesmen and insisted on talking only about British Guyana, where they feared a new Castro-like government might bring Marxism to the mainland.

AS KENNEDY arrived at Birch Grove, he carried a note from his ambassador in London, David Bruce, warning that Macmillan's government was "mortally wounded" by the Profumo affair.

Richard Lamb, who succeeded Macmillan as Conservative candidate for Stockton, does not agree. He maintains that, had Macmillan not been panicked by a new doctor's over-gloomy prognosis of his prostate trouble, he would have secured re-election in 1964. In the archives, Lamb has unearthed the plan of Macmillan and his Chancellor of the Exchequer, Reginald Maudling. Their scheme would have devalued the pound, sold off the dollar portfolio and imposed import controls to manufacture an election-winning boom. It makes for a haunting "if" of history, not only whether it could have worked, but also whether the knowledge of the scheme might have freed Harold Wilson to devalue three years before being forced to in 1967.

Lamb has written an extraordinarily useful, but rather irritating book. It is lopsided, devoting far too much attention to the flailing attempts to avoid entering Europe by devising a European Free Trade Area instead. By far the most interesting nugget, De Gaulle's apparent readiness to grant Britain EEC membership in return for nuclear secrets, gets too little attention. Another 60 pages rehash the very messy process of decolonisation in Africa. By contrast, the 1959 general election, economic policy and the two key Chancellors, Selwyn Lloyd and Maudling, get 40 pages all told.

This odd ordering of priorities combines with a broad lack of analysis to produce archivism, rather than history. And Lamb's archivism is not wholly reliable. Overwhelmed by source material in the Public Record Office, he seems unaware of vital aspects of the Cuban crisis: the presence of Soviet tactical nuclear weapons; and Kennedy's secret deal with Khrushchev to remove the US missile bases in Turkey. Macmillan's memoirs say he would "never have consented". The Americans never bothered to tell him.

Paperbacks

Nicholas Lezard

The Soft Machine, by William Burroughs (Flamingo Modern Classics, £5.99)

ARCHETYPAL Burroughs sentence: "The boy sacrifice is chosen by erection acclaim" — although it's a bit short and does not mention junk, jockstraps, or pink salamanders. His sequel to The Naked Lunch: time, familiarity and enduring influence are softening Burroughs's outlandishness, but not his originality. A genius, I think.

The Monkey-Puzzle Tree, by Elizabeth Nickson (Bloomsbury, £5.99)

AND if you think Burroughs's paranoia is the result of an extended withdrawal nightmare, check this out: a fictionalised account of experiments the CIA performed on God knows how many unwitting Americans, largely involving the forced ingestion of vast amounts of psychotropic drugs. Scary and gripping, and, despite its novelisation, convincing.

The Politics of Dispossession, by Edward W Said (Vintage, £9.99)

SAID'S essays on the theme of Palestinian identity, politics and self-determination — questions so fraught that, as he puts it, he sometimes wonders whether he exists. They date from 1970 to the present day (ie, the Hebron mosque massacre of 1994), and constitute a coherent history of a landless people. Said, Arafat's one-time translator, is hardly impartial, but his is the best voice to listen to.

South of Haunted Dreams, by Eddy L Harris (Penguin, £6.99)

WHEN Harris travelled through Africa in Native Stranger, he discovered that his roots were, in fact, American; here he goes back to discover them, riding a BMW motorbike through the scariest parts of the South, past signs which say things like "Daviess [sic] County Coon Hunters' Club". Harris is great: he has an enormous chip on his shoulder, loses his rag with cops and white liberals alike, and has a big, forgiving heart.

Who Will Run the Frog Hospital?, by Lorrie Moore (Faber, £5.99)

I HATE the idea of a gender divide in fiction, but this is a case in point: the story of a woman in a decaying marriage, remembering her adolescent friendship in Nowheresville, USA. Calculatedly poignant, the kind of book that comes with protective, menacing endorsements (love this book or else). Very well written, but perhaps a little slight.

The blues go to market

Richard Williams

The History of the Blues
by Francis Davis
Secker & Warburg 309pp £17.99

THIRTY-ODD years ago, if you wanted to meet an expert on the blues, you had to find a deviant musicologist or an inky-fingered schoolboy. Nowadays you'd go looking for an ad agency "creative".

They can tell you all about it. And what they know is that the blues comes in one size: three chords and 12 bars, with whining bottleneck guitar and wheezing harmonica attached, played on the front porches of shotgun shacks by fat old black men in distressed dungarees. It is a music of rugged individuality, impervious to commercial contamination. And it can be used to sell just about anything you like.

By any kind of historical logic, the blues should have expired some time in the mid-sixties, when the Supremes and the Temptations became (in the slogan of Berry Gordy's Motown Records) the sound of young America. Black teenagers in the northern cities had no desire to be reminded of their all-too-proximate roots in the sharecropper's soil of the Mississippi Delta. As the great figures of the post-war generation — Sonny Boy Williamson, Howlin' Wolf, Little Walter, Lightnin' Hopkins, Jimmy Reed, Muddy Waters — passed away, it seemed their music would die with them, or at best become a tourist attraction, as had happened to New Orleans jazz.

And yet, miraculously, this music refused to accept its apparent destiny as a museum piece. The blues may never again be able to claim a role as the mouthpiece of a nation (or at least of a nation within a nation), but it found for itself a new function: one that, in just about the most ironic way imaginable, ensures its continued viability.

From pre-faded jeans to imported lager, any product requiring an ambience of funky authenticity can be enhanced by a blues soundtrack. A music almost as old as the century has become an enduring emblem of mass-market fashion. Byproducts have included the re-examination of what might be called the classic texts (a CD box of Robert Johnson's complete recordings sold more than half a million copies in the early nineties), the regeneration of the careers of a few surviving originals (pre-eminently John Lee Hooker, who has enjoyed the biggest hits of his 50-year career during the present decade), and a burst of creative energy among a new intake of black blues musicians, led by the singer and guitarist Robert Cray.

So one might imagine that there is a new generation of listeners to go with this hectic activity, and that they will be wanting to find out where the music came from and what it means. In that respect Francis Davis's attractively produced History, the companion volume to a US television series, takes its place in an honourable tradition of enthusiastic socio-musicological works dating back to the late fifties, to Samuel Charters's pioneering The Country Blues and Paul Oliver's Blues Fell This Morning.



Muddy Waters relaxing between gigs PHOTOGRAPH: VAL WILMER

Frankly, after all the work done by a legion of diligent chroniclers, there is not much new to be said about the story of the blues. But Davis summarises the tale efficiently, and is accurate and persuasive in his necessarily brief descriptions of the significant figures (the emotional heart of the book is located in the sound of the Muddy Waters band of the fifties, with which it would be fruitless to argue). He also does right by the social context, particularly the effects of slavery on black family life and the still unravelling consequences of great migration from the plantations to the factories.

Otherwise, his greatest assets are broadmindedness and an ability to temper a romantic love of his subject with a splash of realism. "Blues singers always seem to be saying more than the words to their songs literally say, and this sometimes encourages us to hear things that simply aren't there," he writes. At the very least, this is a clear-headed guide for the novice.

But that is not the end of the matter. Davis knows that the dynamic of the current blues revival is not to be confused with real artistic vitality. Throughout the century, Afro-American vernacular music has evolved at such a rate that any form of retrospection seems like a betrayal. In the age of hip-hop, what does it mean to listen to a 75-year-old man recreating the music he carried with him from Mississippi to Michigan in his youth? And what does it mean when a 25-year-old man makes the same music? Davis worries about it, but he doesn't have an answer. No one does.

The slack bard out of New Jersey

Philip Hensher

Allen Ginsberg, Journals 1954-1958
edited by Gordon Ball
Viking 489pp £25

THE PURVEYORS of popular culture long ago decided that the Garden of Eden was reconstructed in America in the 1950s. Anyone trying to convey an idea of happiness, innocence or order in an advertisement for beer, chewing gum or trousers quickly reaches for images of soda fountains, wide cars, girls in white sweaters and ponytails and boys in baseball jackets.

Nothing could be a more effective tonic to these repellent images of normality and cleanliness than the seedy journals of Allen Ginsberg. This volume of authentic unwashed Americana covers the years 1954 to 1958, as Ginsberg was attaining a sort of fame and trying to write a great verse masterpiece. Running away from William Burroughs, who was in love with him, he seduced a number of men, notably Neal Cassady, whose wife threw him out of the house when she found out.

He hung out with the original beatniks, whose mannerisms, drinking habits and general louchenesss were quickly imitated by the half-witted young everywhere from San Francisco to Solihull. He met Robert La Vigne and Peter Orlovsky and Kenneth Rexroth and had, very obviously, the most lovely time. A grand tour of Europe with Gregory Corso on no money at all introduced him to Tristan Tzara and Cyril Connolly. He told Auden there had to be a revolution in poetry; Auden told him he was talking nonsense. Edith Sitwell took them to lunch; one would have liked to have been at the next table. And, meanwhile, he wrote some of the most unspeakably terrible poetry ever written.

It's a moot point why Ginsberg is such an awful poet. A mix of Walt Whitman's portentously biblical manner, William Carlos William's unadorned statement of objects, and street slang, might have resulted in something better. Ginsberg, though, is not someone who might bring scrupulousness to a wild mixture of material, and his poetry is too often too random, and too unrevised, to make much impact. "A truck full of baggage piled/together, aluminium packages of blood, cardboard/boxes with names & waybills fixed thereon/10677431/ Numbers. Tragedy reduced to numbers." Or reduced to something, anyway.

It isn't unfair to say that absolutely anyone could write like this, given enough paper and a nice sharp pencil. Nor that poetry ought to be a bit more than random jottings, or why should anyone be interested? But the journals throw a good deal of light on why he wrote like this. When Ginsberg said to his psychotherapist that he wanted to "stop work, write poetry, spend days out of doors, visit museums and friends, and cultivate his own perceptions and visions", it is not likely he thought that writing poetry was a discipline or a craft; more something that might just happen by chance. And, alas, what resulted is poetry which has, rather too clearly, just happened.

These look like very private journals; it is difficult to understand what was happening at any moment. But their private references and occasional obscurity are pretty similar to those of Ginsberg's published poetry, and there isn't much to suggest that he would or could have written differently. In fact, these are in many ways the sort of journals written for the benefit of an audience, and for posterity.

NO ONE writes long impressive lists of the books they have read that month without at least half an eye on an impressed reader. There are other passages, which will surprise most readers of Ginsberg's poetry, in which he discusses the technique of poetry and tries out examples of different verse forms. It's less surprising, though, that Ginsberg's exercises are all hopelessly wrong and incompetent; at one point he seems to think that the noun "rebel" is stressed on the second syllable. What the journals demonstrate is what one had always suspected: that his free verse is not the work of someone with a sound technique who just chose to write that way. Rather, rantings like Howl are the product of someone who can't write more technically demanding verse.

The journals themselves are pretty tough going, but it isn't just because of the occasional obscurity. Plenty of journals which were genuinely written for private use and are full of private references end up being much more readable than these — Boswell's, for example. But Ginsberg's are difficult to wade through because there's rarely the sense of much interest in other human beings. Although he met a good number of the great writers of the age, in his tour of Europe, for instance, no biographer of Celine or Edith Sitwell is going to turn to Ginsberg for any snippet of information. We know he met them, but it doesn't seem to occur to him that it might be worth mentioning what happened, or what they were like. This might be forgivable; he had no particular obligation to write about the famous, and when he met most of them, he was travelling and impoverished. But it confirms the general worry that he wasn't interested in other people. When he seduced Neal Cassady, for instance, there's not much sense of what Carolyn Cassady thought about it; rather, the question is "the future consequences of Neal and my relationship to be studied". As for her, "she's violent, seemingly unpropitiable". So that's all right then.

How people write about sex is always interesting, although not always aesthetically so. Ginsberg and Orlovsky fell in love and promised fidelity to each other months before they slept together. When they finally did sleep together, Ginsberg recorded the sexual encounter in some detail. But I doubt one would know from the way Ginsberg writes about it that he was sleeping with anyone he knew at all. He admires "his bare and healthy young man's arm"; "his waist . . . was warm and narrow". Peter Orlovsky is reduced to a collection of fine attributes. Ginsberg obviously loved him, and the night he records was the beginning of a very long relationship. What we have is the failure to convey that feeling, and that is a failure in the writing.

"I Allen Ginsberg Bard out of New Jersey": what on earth was he trying to prove? When this question was put to him at a reading in Los Angeles once, he said, "Nakedness"; when the questioner persisted, Ginsberg took off his clothes. I wonder what that proved, or what it proved when he had to put his clothes back on, afterwards. No, what we have in the journals is the devastating self-portrait of someone so in love with the bohemian life that the writing seemed rather incidental. And so enchanted by the looseness of his existence that he began to believe writing, too, could be approached in a loose manner, and not polished, revised, and, nine times out of ten, rejected.

Loveless in the time of the marquise

Laura Cumming

Of Love and Other Demons
by Gabriel García Márquez
Cape 147pp £13.99

IN 1949, Gabriel García Márquez was sent as a young reporter to cover the emptying of tombs in a convent in Cartagena. Many holy bones had been arduously exhumed from their rotting coffins when a pickaxe blow to the granite crypt released a sudden stream of intensely copper-coloured hair, still attached to the skull of a child. Laid out, these resplendent tresses measured 22 metres and 11 centimetres. The foreman, with all the calm acceptance of a character from a García Márquez novel, pronounced it "a good average" for 200 years of posthumous growth. García Márquez himself reported excitedly on the probable relics of a local legend: the little marquise with hair like a bridal train who had performed miracles along the Colombian coast two centuries before.

In his 1982 Nobel Lecture, García Márquez eloquently associated Latin America's natural wonders — camel-shaped mules, say, or gold-eating hens — with the political phenomena of its sudden deaths and disappearances. This "outsized, unbridled reality", which the West found so hard to credit, had to be rendered believable. In his new novel, an imaginary life of the miraculous marquise, the exotic environment is actually less bizarre than the barbaric prejudices of the colonial élite. Pigs may talk in Cartagena, but the little girl who doesn't tell the truth is the one demonically possessed.

The Marquise Sierva María has been taught to lie by a crew of Yoruba slaves. She is anything but the angelic child of legend. Her preference is for rooster's blood and pickled iguana, and for biting her way out of conversation. She lives in a pile of hay in the courtyard of her parents' degenerate mansion, performing her African dancing for the next spontaneous fiesta. As well she might. Her mother, once a seductive beauty, has been "erased from the world by her abuse of fermented honey". Her father lies in his hammock, "as pale as a lily because the bats drained his blood while he slept". Every few years they accidentally meet. The ensuing battles demoralise the mastiffs.

García Márquez: no other novel had made him feel so insecure

When Sierva María is bitten by a rabid dog, the costly Spanish doctors are so alarmed by her failure to contract the disease that they almost succeed in generating the symptoms by violence. Word reaches the Holy Office, which instantly perceives a case of Satanism. The marquise is sent to a nunnery, a priest despatched to exorcise her, and he is possessed by that other demon: "the most terrible one of all".

García Márquez has little to say about love in this short, dark book. Love as the cataclysm of existence, the romantic malady of life, the star that illuminates old age — that sublime theme of his greatest masterpiece, Love In The Time Of Cholera, is reduced here to the cautionary tale of a priest and his parishioner separated by a cruel, inquisitorial church. Father Cayetano ends up in a leper colony. Sierva María dies. It is claimed, of love. The fairy-tale proof is that her spectacular hair, shorn off by the barbarous nuns, "gushed forth like bubbles".

Of Love And Other Demons moves through its lurid scenes of slave-trading and demon-baiting with easy acceleration. Márquez's fresh, lucid prose is as epigrammatic as ever — "Disbelief is more resistant than faith because it is sustained by the senses" — and his sentences are brilliant miniature portraits — "Dr Abrenuncio was identical to the king of clubs, he wore a broad-brimmed hat for the sun, and the black cloak favoured by educated libertines". And read as a comedy, the novel is wonderful when García Márquez undercuts all those gothic excesses. The marquis's trouble is not vampire bats but a pathological fear of farmyard animals. His wife ultimately succumbs to chocolate. And Cayetano, longing for a melodramatic death, hopelessly fails in "his confessed desire to contract leprosy".

But all those fabulously long historical perspectives in García Márquez's fiction are missing from this book. Even the political content is sidelined. García Márquez said in an interview for El País that no previous novel had made him feel so insecure. By confining himself to this narrow, quasi-satire, he seems to have left no room for his own marvellously outsized humanity.

Crushed and stinking

Rebecca Gowers

The Garlic Ballads
by Mo Yan
trans Howard Goldblatt
Hamish Hamilton 290pp £15.99

IN PARADISE County, China, the local government has ordered farmers to plant garlic, undertaking to buy the crop, freeze it, and sell it on as supplies elsewhere run low. When the farmers produce a huge glut, however, the government reneges on this agreement. It is 1987. There are protests, with many farmers arrested, imprisoned, tortured, and in some cases killed.

Mo Yan provides an increasingly mordant political breakdown of these events through the songs of a blind minstrel, but he also reveals what happens through the stories of the Fang and Gao families. Along with the garlic narrative, we follow the horrible consequences of the love of Gao Ma for the Fang daughter, Jinju, in defiance of an illegal dynastic marriage contract.

These stories are indeed interwoven, or "intertwined", as the jacket puts it. But there are enough references to reincarnation; the tales themselves are told in a sufficiently non-linear fashion; and the ending, with one man captured and another on the run, is so much like the beginning, that it makes more sense to view the whole as a set of interlocking and unbreakable circles. The characters view their lives with fatalism and outrage by turns.

The novel is immensely harsh. Mo describes torture without inspiring any of the doubts that might come from its being served up as a form of entertainment. He achieves this partly through being genuinely shocking, as when Jinju's father, to prove he fears no reprisals, casually slams a bronze pipe across her head and knocks her out. More importantly, though, instead of filmic exterior images, Mo will often produce highly physical, interior descriptions of violence that cause the reader to feel frightened revulsion.

The circling stories prevent this violence from losing force. The glints of joy throughout the novel can seem almost perverse, as when Gao Ma, his head split open by a policeman, is sped in a police van to hospital, and his relative Gao Yang, lying beside him with his own wounds, reflects happily that he has never travelled so fast before.

On this occasion Gao Ma's blood smells to Gao Yang of garlic. Elsewhere, we discover that the characters' breath, urine, and even their dead flesh smells of garlic. As the crop goes bad, all the people can do is eat it, and soon a stench drains through them that cannot be obliterated, no matter that they run away through great plantings of indigo, coriander, sorghum, acacia, mulberry or jute; no matter that some kill themselves. This makes the novel strangely gripping.

Howard Goldblatt's translation is patchy. He includes jarring Americanisms: "Say, pal, can't you stop that." Worse, his writing can be deadly flat: "With his yellow teeth bared, he looked like a cornered man about to break and run." But the novel, fraught with questions of indignity, is wonderful enough to survive any lapses of dignity in prose.

Little black knight of the woods

Ralph Whitlock

AMERICA'S biggest woodpecker has been making a thorough nuisance of itself. Common enough in well-wooded country in the south-eastern states, it is strikingly plumaged in black and red, with some white markings, and is traditionally at home in dense, mature forest. Bird-watchers are delighted if they can mark off the pileated woodpecker on their list.

But now they are emerging as champions of mischief. A Canadian reader writes to tell me that they have taken to attacking electricity transmission poles in north-western Ontario and are steadily increasing their sphere of activities. "An expert gave it as his opinion that they attacked poles already infested with insects, but has been proved wrong. They use 20-metre western cedar poles as nesting-sites, digging cavities that are 60cm deep and 15cm in diameter.

"They will chop their way through blackjack poles, undeterred by creosote and nicotine and will attack brand new poles still dripping with preservatives, even before any self-respecting ant has a chance to soften it up for them. These feats they execute with such panache that it is impossible to stay angry with them for long.

"I have not known pileated woodpeckers to attack poles piled in our yards, but once erected on a transmission line, they are at risk as potential nesting sites, strategic boundary markers or sounding boards.

"One of their rites of courtship consists of a beautiful little pageant where the birds assume positions on opposite sides of the pole and seemingly float up, down and around it, always remaining directly across from their partner. Their tensed wings beat in co-ordination with the bop of their feet. One day in mid-March my wife and I witnessed this five-minute ballet in front of our house. The dancing duo were so smitten by each other that they were oblivious to our presence as we advanced to within 8 metres.

"However, a few numbers should add some perspective to our conundrum. A 20-metre wooden pole may cost as much as £2,000 when installed, depending on location and access. Two of these uprights are used for every 'H' support frame, and about nine supports are used for every kilometre of line.

"The threat is just as real to distribution and service lines. While they may be smaller, their encumbrance in some cases by switches, arresters and transformers, not to mention shared usage with telephone and cable television companies, could make them even more costly to replace.

"Add to this the possible abbreviation of a wooden hydro pole's life expectancy from about 35 years to less than a month, and the proportions of our quandary become apparent.

"In the Kenora district of Ontario damage by woodpeckers is so prevalent that the utility has switched to steel poles at three times the cost.

"One spring morning we were replacing poles on a twinpole, H-frame structure. One pole had been set and secured and the second had been raised when we were challenged. The 'glove' was thrown down and simultaneously a drum roll was sounded as the invader tested the timbre of this new, shiny black resonator.

"Negotiations stalled and tension escalated. One of our junior workmen from his vantage point halfway up the pole fired the opening salvo. He swung his crescent wrench and struck the pole about 5cm below our tormentor's perch.

"HIS APLOMB jarred, our rival executed a back flip while uttering an abbreviated version of his call. And this we soon surmised was not so much a chink in his armour as an expression of delight that we had risen to the bait and entered the contest.

"We managed to complete the changeover of poles. Our topmost wire, normally located at the highest point of the structure, was lowered by about 30cm as a concession to this determined little black knight of the woods . . ."

ILLUSTRATION: ROGER PEARCE

Chess Leonard Barden

EVER since last year's Intel Grand Prix launch, the 25-minute game knock-outs for £100,000 prize funds have been dominated by four players: Kasparov, Ivanchuk, Anand or Kramnik. This quartet has produced the winner of each tournament, and usually the beaten finalist.

They are all top 10 GMs who have tempered their game to quickplay time limits and acquired the difficult art of keeping control — of the clock and the position. Earlier fears that quickplays would mean random results have been unfounded. Rather, the outcome has been too predictable, so that the Grand Prix has suffered from the absence of Karpov, world No 2 and outstanding in rapid chess.

Last month in New York, Kasparov beat Ivanchuk 2-0 in the final after earlier scraping past Kramnik on tie-break. A 1-1 tie at 25-minute chess is broken by a single game where White has five minutes on the clock and Black four, but a draw counts as a win for Black. In the 1994 Grand Prix it was six minutes to five and Black won almost every time, but five-four is working out more evenly.

The Grand Prix circuit moves to England next month. An 11-round open-to-all qualifier at Hastings on August 28-29, with six Grand Prix places at stake, is sure to be the UK's strongest open of 1995 with up to 50 GMs. No truly ambitious player should miss it.

Then comes the Intel London Grand Prix on August 31-September 3 at the Sedgwick Centre, Aldgate, London. This will be a lively spectator occasion with giant TV screens, earphone commentaries, often dramatic chess at fast time limits, and the atmosphere of a sporting event.

Last year the Pentium Genius computer beat Kasparov, but since then Intel have wimpishly agreed to grandmaster demands that computers should be excluded.

Tickets for the London Grand Prix are available at £15 daily (£7.50 children) from +44 (0)171-388 2404.

Kasparov's first win in the New York final was excellent containment chess, undermining White's forward knights, then mobilising his own bishops until Ivanchuk collapsed under time pressure.

Ivanchuk-Kasparov, Sicilian

1 e4 c5 2 Nf3 d6 3 d4 cxd4 4 **Nxd4 Nf6 5 Nc3 a6 6 Be3** e5 7 **Nf3 Be7 8 Bc4 0-0 9 0-0** Be6 10 **Bb3 Nc6 11 Bg5 Na5 12** Bxf6 **Bxf6 13 Nd5 Nxb3 14** axb3 Bg5 **15 Qd3 Bh6 16 Rad1** Rc8 17 **Nd2 b5 18 c3 Kh8 19** b4 Ra8 **20 Nb3 f5 21 Na5 Rc8 22** Qh3 **Rf7 23 Rfe1 Qe8 24 Qh4** Qf8 25 **exf5 Bxf5 26 f3 Bc2 27** Ra1 Bf5 **28 h3 Qe8 29 Qf2 Qe6 30** Rad1 **Qg6 31 Kh1 Rcf8 32** h4? Bd3 **33 Rd2** 33 Ra1 Be4 34 Ne3 Rxf **Bxd2 34 Qxd2 Qg3 35** Nb7 **Rxb7 36 Resigns.**

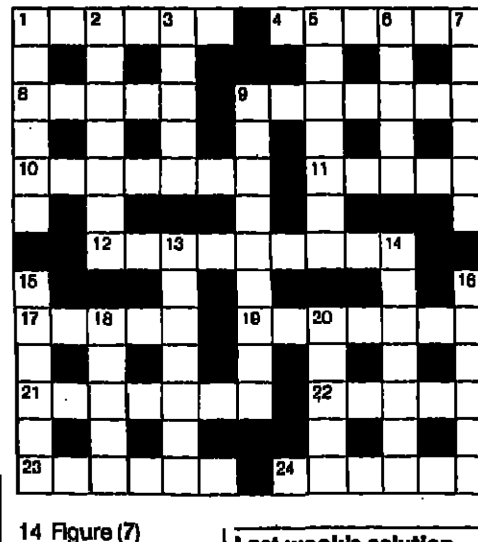
Earlier, Kasparov easily defeated Britain's No 2, Michael Adams, whose dubious opening led to a weak queen's side and loss of material. Ominously, Adams is starting to show the same Kasparov-fear symptoms which have long handicapped Nigel Short.

No 2379

White mates in three moves against any defence (by K Junker). This week's problem defeats many solvers even though the cornered BK has only one square.

No 2378: 1 Nc5? plans Bxe2 2 Nxc6 bxc6 3 Qxe2 with play against Black's Q-side pawns, but Black wins by 2 . . . Qxc3!

Quick crossword no. 271



Across

1 Cupboard (6)
4 Agile (6)
8 Take sails down (5)
9 Vain (7)
10 Disordered (7)
11 Royal house (5)
12 Amuse (9)
17 Flower (5)
19 Try (7)
21 Large-billed bird (7)
22 Laconic (5)
23 Remember — and ring again (6)
24 Uproar — in the asylum? (6)

Down

1 Start project (6)
2 Butchery (7)
3 Rowing crew (5)
5 Sloth (7)
6 Mix (5)
7 Make certain (6)
9 Doubtful (9)
13 Representative (7)
14 Figure (7)
15 Proust (anag.) — coma (6)
16 Current (6)
18 Shrub (5)
20 Name (5)

Last week's solution

Bridge Zia Mahmood

YOUR starter for ten — in which continent is Israel? As far as international bridge is concerned, Israel is in Europe, and a team from Israel quickly established themselves at the top of the table in the early rounds of the 1995 European Bridge Championships.

David Birman and Shalom Zeligman have been part of the Israeli squad for as long as anyone can remember. On the deal below it was Zeligman who produced one of the best defensive plays of the tournament. Take his cards and see what you would do. As West, your hand is:

♠9532 ♥AQ3 ♦92 ♣KQ96

and your side takes no part in the bidding, which develops like this:

South	West	North	East
			No
1♥	No	2♦	No
2♥	No	4♥	No
4NT	No	5♦	No
5♥	No	No	No

4NT was Blackwood, 5D showed one ace, the rest of the auction was natural. You decide to lead the king of clubs, and the dummy appears:

North
♠K7
♥J82
♦AK8763
♣83

West
♠9532
♥AQ3
♦92
♣KQ96

Declarer wins the opening lead with his ace, plays a spade to dummy's king and a spade back to his ace, then the queen of spades, discarding dummy's club. Your signals allow you to determine that South has the remaining spade and your partner is now void in the suit. Declarer ruffs a club in dummy and leads a heart to the ten. Your play.

This was the full deal (see table right). If Shalom Zeligman had made the natural play of winning the heart with the queen and playing his last spade,

North
♠K7
♥J82
♦AK8763
♣83

West
♠9532
♥AQ3
♦92
♣KQ96

East
♠1084
♥96
♦1054
♣J754

South
♠AQJ6
♥K10754
♦QJ
♣A10

declarer could succeed if he guessed to ruff with dummy's jack, cross to hand with a diamond and lead the king of hearts, felling East's nine.

But Zeligman nonchalantly won the ten of hearts with the ace, then led a spade! Now it appeared to South that East had the queen of hearts, so there was no point in ruffing with the jack. South discarded a diamond from dummy — but Birman ruffed with the nine of hearts, and Zeligman later took the decisive trick with this queen. A simple, yet brilliant deception.

Sports Diary Shiv Sharma

Graham is banned

FORMER Arsenal manager George Graham has been banned from the game for a year after being found guilty of misconduct by a three-man commission of the Football Association.

The charges relate to Graham's acceptance of £425,000 from an agent after the transfers of two players to the North London club.

The commission came up with this sanction against the 50-year-old Scot last week. It means that he cannot have "any involvement in football administration, management or coaching, including the signing of players," until June 30, 1996. He was given 14 days to appeal.

The FA confirmed later that it will be asking Fifa to extend worldwide the one-year ban in an attempt to forestall Graham's hopes of pursuing an immediate career abroad.

THE West Indians, who inflicted one of the worst defeats upon England when they beat them in the third Test at Edgbaston, were reduced to figures of fun by a maths master and his team-mates last week.

Steve Dean, of Staffordshire, hit a superb 91, full of confidence and style, for Minor Counties who defeated the tourists by four wickets in their one-day game at Reading.

The West Indians made 266 for 9 in their 55 overs, a total Minor Counties overhauled for the loss of six wickets with nearly four overs to spare. The tourists contributed heavily to their own downfall by conceding a staggering 78 extras, including 45 no-balls.

BRITAIN'S high hurdles world champion and record holder Colin Jackson has been left out of the team for next month's world championships in Gothenburg after angering the national selectors. Jackson withdrew from last weekend's AAA championships in Birmingham because of "injury" — yet turned up in Italy on Sunday to win over hurdles at Padua.

A HUGE crowd gathered on Sunday to watch Spain's Miguel Indurain cut a cake and blow the candles at Guzet-Neige, in southern France, to celebrate his 31st birthday. This is the fifth successive birthday he has spent in the yellow jersey as a competitor in the Tour de France.




Indurain: birthday celebrations

AUSTRALIAN golfer Wayne Riley kept his nerve to hold off Nick Faldo and land the Scottish Open, his first tournament on the European Tour. Riley was pressed relentlessly by Faldo but ended the Briton's challenge with a birdie at 17. A final round 72 left him 12-under, two clear of Faldo who birdied 18 for a 69. Colin Montgomerie was two shots further back in third place.

THE Italian Boxing Federation has banned WBO super-welterweight champion Gianfranco Rosi for two years for failing a dope test. Rosi tested positive for amphetamines after he defeated champion Verno Phillips of the United States to win the WBO title in May.

DAVE MERRINGTON is Southampton football club's new manager. The reserve team coach has been promoted to the position of first-team boss following Alan Ball's departure for Manchester City. Merrington has previously been assistant manager at Leeds and Sunderland. He has spent the last 11 years on the Dell's backroom staff.

AUSTRALIA'S Rugby Union selectors have axed world record try scorer David Campese for the first match of the two-Test Bledisloe Cup series against New Zealand. The 32-year-old wing has not been included in a 21-strong squad for the game in Auckland. Campese had a disappointing World Cup in South Africa last month. Phil Kearns takes over as captain following Michael Lynagh's retirement.

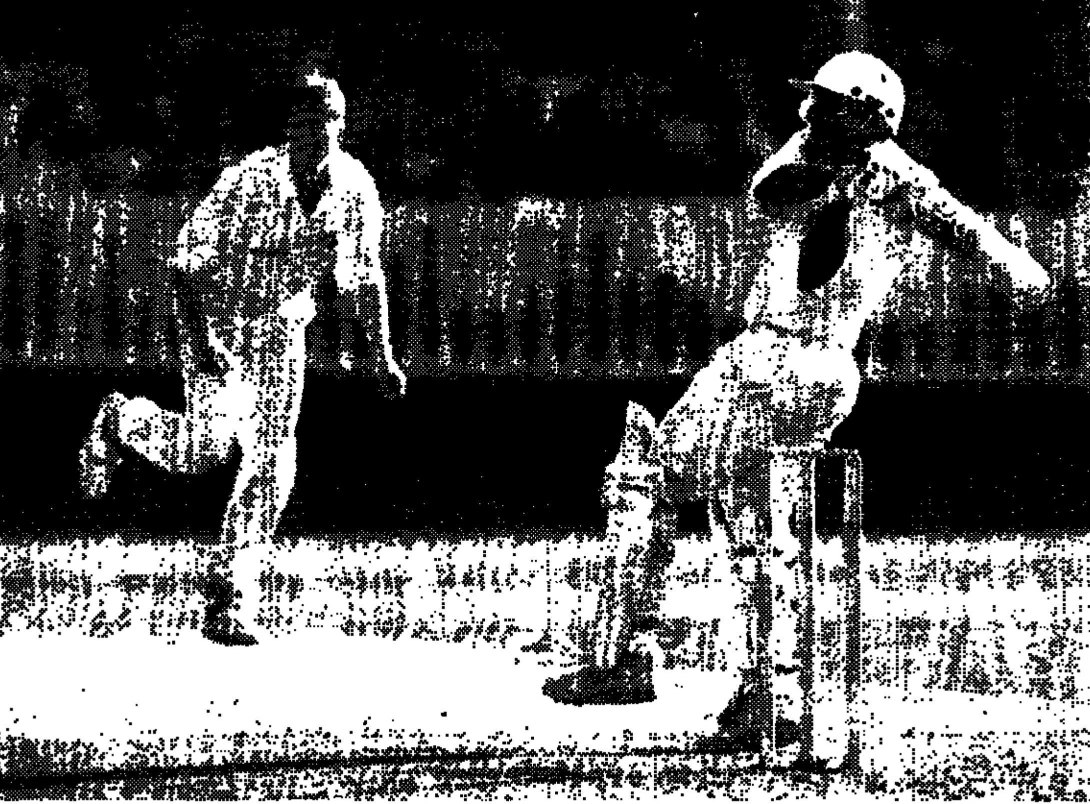
AUSTRALIA grabbed six tries in the second half as they beat New Zealand 46-10 in the third Rugby League Test at Brisbane to take the series 3-0.

ALLAN BORDER, the 40-year-old former Australian captain, has delayed his retirement from first-class cricket for at least another year. He will play for the champions Queensland in the Sheffield Shield next season.

BRITAIN'S tennis players completed a whitewash over Monaco in the Euro-Africa Davis Cup zonal match at Eastbourne. They took an unassailable lead last Saturday when Neil Broad and Mark Petchey beat Chrisophe Boggetti and Sebastien Graeff 6-4, 6-0, 7-6. Then on Sunday, Greg Rusedski outclassed Graeff 6-0, 6-1 and Tim Henman defeated Boggetti 6-1, 6-4.

JUAN Manuel Fangio, the boy from the backstreets of Balcarce, Argentina, who went on to become the world's greatest motor racing driver, has died aged 84. Fangio started 28 of his 51 grands prix from pole position, winning 24 times and finishing second on another 10 occasions. His record of five world championships is unlikely to be broken for years to come.

Cricket Benson & Hedges Cup final Lancashire v Kent



Pulling power . . . Aravinda de Silva puts Glen Chapple into the crowd on his way to a glorious, losing century in the B&H final at Lord's PHOTOGRAPH: DAN SMITH

De Silva shines but Lancs take the prize

Mike Selvey at Lord's

TO LANCASHIRE went the spoils but to Aravinda de Silva of Kent went the glory. Lancashire took their 11th one-day title in the Saturday gloom, beating Kent by 35 runs, a convincing enough margin on a day in which they were generally in control. Kent have now been beaten in their past five finals.

But in their darkest hour a beacon shone in the form of an innings of the highest calibre from the little Sri Lanka genius. It was the best, most intuitive seen in any match at Lord's since Mohammad Azharuddin put England to the sword in 1990 with a century from 88 balls.

From only 95 balls de Silva made 112 runs out of the 177 scored during the time he was at the crease and, while he was working his steel-wristed magic, Kent retained some hope of overhauling Lancashire's 274 for seven, a total exceeded in a Benson & Hedges final only by the 290 made by Essex against Surrey 16 years ago.

De Silva was out with 60 runs still required and for the tail to knock off the rest was too much to hope; there were 17 balls left when Ian Austin calmly strolled under a catch in front of the Pavilion rails to bring proceedings to an end.

Lancashire won because on the day Kent were too lightweight. They were without their captain Mark Benson, the stabilising influence and pillar around which their totals are established, and their seam bowlers were unable to make use of what little moisture might have been hanging in the air once Steve Marsh had won the toss and play started, 10 minutes late because of light rain.

Hindsight, too, might have made Kent regret the decision to field first but, once they had made the desperately unimaginative selection of Tim Wren, a pretty ordinary left-arm seamer at the moment, in place of Min Patel, a left-arm spinner within spitting distance of a Test place, they had little option. The later performance of Gary Yates, whose clever off-spin brought him three wickets, put that choice into perspective.

There was also some scintillatingly efficient running between the wickets by the Lancashire batsmen, illustrated by the boundary count that saw them hit 17 fours and a six to Kent's 23 fours and three sixes.

Overall, too, the Lancashire bowlers, Austin, Watkinson and Yates, were tighter when it mattered. Contrary to the view of Ian Botham, who presented the Gold Award to de Silva, this was not a brilliant one-day pitch, nullifying pace as it did.

Matches such as this, however, can hinge on single moments that assume their true importance only in the final analysis. The first came from the fourth ball of the match when Mike Atherton got a top edge to a cramped pull shot and de Silva, sprinting in from fine leg and diving heroically forwards, just failed to bring off what would have been a memorable catch.

Atherton went on to make 93, sharing stands of 80 for the first wicket with Jason Gallian (36) and 121 in 26 overs with John Crawley for the second. Crawley is not only slimmer this year but less square on in his stance. His two-hour stay might have reached a premature end, however, when, on 36, he went for a quick single — but McCague's throw from point was not quite accurate enough for the bowler, Fleming, to reach the stumps with his first lunge. Crawley went on to make 83 from 89 balls with the most fluent batting of the innings. But no one on the day could hold a candle to de Silva.

Scores: Lancashire 274 for 7 (Atherton 93, Crawley 83). Kent 239 all out (De Silva 112).
Lancashire won by 35 runs

Major goes for sporting gold

John Carvel and John Duncan

JOHN MAJOR promised to restore British sporting prowess by promoting competitive team games in schools, but the proposals were backed up with only £4 million of extra spending and will rely heavily on unpaid work by teachers.

The Prime Minister in his long-delayed sports policy statement set the goal of bringing "every child in every school within reach of adequate sporting facilities by the year 2000". This could be achieved with funds from the National Lottery which was scheduled to channel up to £300 million a year into sporting facilities in schools and clubs. About £100 million would be devoted to a new British Academy of Sport, a centre of excellence for athletes and coaches.

The main thrust of the policy statement, Sport — Raising the Game, was to promote a change of attitudes. There would be no compulsory adjustment to the national curriculum, but ministers hoped to see two hours of formal lesson time devoted each week to PE and sport. A further four hours of sport should be available at lunchtimes, in the afternoons or evenings, or at weekends.

Some teachers already gave up their time to organise extra-curricular sport. "But sadly that is the picture only for some of our schools," said Gillian Shephard, the Education and Employment Secretary.

Measures to spread this practice would include improved teacher training and a Sportsmark scheme to recognise sporting excellence in schools. The Sports Council will have to be consulted before planning permission is given for development on playing fields.

Although the document emphasised the grassroots values of sport in schools, it seemed as Mr Major chatted with sports stars Rob Andrew, Rory Underwood, Roger Black and Devon Malcolm on the Downing Street lawn, that he had gold medals and Ashes wins on his mind as much as gold stars and sack races.